

# ACORN ACTION

THE ULTIMATE ACORN GAMES MAGAZINE



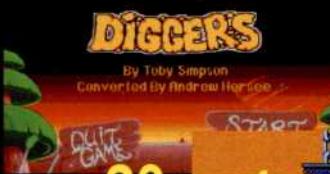
In this issue

## FLASHBACK

CINEMA COMES TO LIFE  
Plus fantastic Features



A COMPLETE ACORN  
A3010 GAMES SYSTEM



DIGGERS

By Toby Simpson  
Converted by Andrew Horsoe

Skies Of Fire - The Birds  
Of War Pilot's Guide

20 pages of **Reviews**

## SPEEDBALL

BRUTAL DELUXE  
AA VERSION



Including:  
Diggers  
Magnetoids, Speedball 2  
Sensible Soccer, James Pond 2  
and a host of others

ON THIS MONTH'S AMAZING ACTIONDISC - FULL-ON PLAYABLE FLASHBACK DEMO  
PLUS ACORN ACTION BACKDROP AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

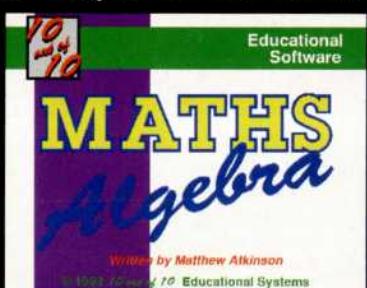
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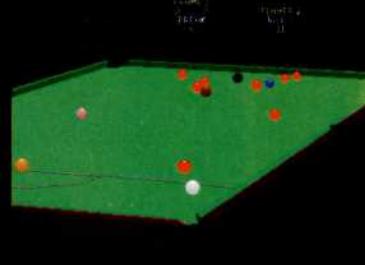
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# The 10 out of 10 Series

Rapidly becoming Britain's favourite choice in educational software



## Maths (Algebra)

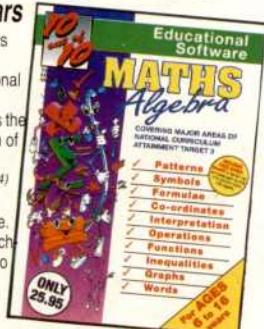
For children 6 to 16 years

"10 out of 10 Maths (Algebra) meets all the criteria for an outstanding educational program and fully deserves first place as the Edutainment Program of the year. Ten out of Ten for it!"

- Amiga User International (January '94)

"This pack is very good. It is well suited to both home and school use. It encourages good skills, like searching for patterns and estimating. Also it's available on approval, so what are you waiting for?"

- Acorn Computing (December '93)



## Maths (Number)

For children 6 to 16 years

"Well thought out to offer real benefits to children studying in British schools."

- PC Plus (July '93)

"Educationally worthwhile and exciting to play - a rare combination."

- Archimedes World (December '92)

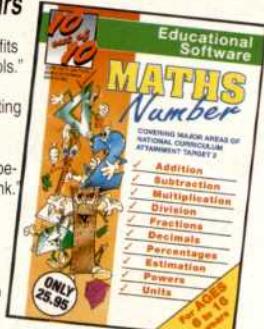
"Unique in home-based programs because of the National Curriculum link."

- The Micro User (September '92)

"Excellent for reinforcing specific mathematics knowledge."

- Junior Education (July '93)

"The 10 out of 10 Series lives up to its name." - PC Home (August '93)

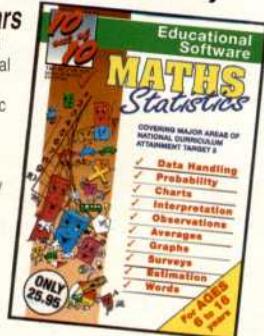


## Maths (Statistics)

For children 6 to 16 years

Attainment Target 5 of the National Curriculum is Data Handling - a vital area of Mathematics. 10 out of 10 Maths (Statistics) covers 36 specific topics from that subject.

In this package, recording animal sightings in an animated pond or rolling dice are just two of the many challenges that children will relish as they learn about statistics. And can graph drawing be a game? It becomes arcade action as bricks and bombs are dropped onto the charts. This is a really enjoyable way to learn about statistics.



## The INNOVATIVE 10 out of 10 Series

These highly acclaimed suites of programs are a revolutionary step forward in educational software. They ALL use a unique system of automatically recording children's progress as they play and learn. This is just one of the many features which sets the 10 out of 10 Series in a class of its own.

Each package contains SIX expertly designed educational games covering TEN essential areas of a child's education. All packages cover a wide age range and subjects are available for all children from three to sixteen years of age.

As children learn from the games their progress is automatically recorded in 36 specific challenges - the National Curriculum Attainment Targets of these areas are optionally displayed on screen in subject-based packages. All the programs are designed in Britain to be fun for single players or groups and the assessment system can monitor the progress of up to 4000 children with no input from parent or teacher needed. Watch them, join in the fun or leave them and return later to check their progress. You're in control!

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We are so confident you'll like 10 out of 10 software that we'll let you try it FREE. Ask for a free trial\* and we will not bank any payment until you've had chance to test the programs yourself.

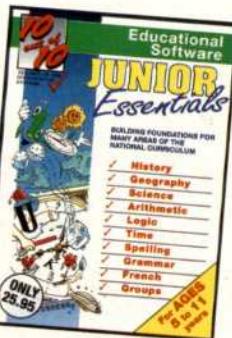
DEMONSTRATION VERSIONS are also available - each subject is on a separate disk. They cost £1 each. This will be refunded when you order the full version.

## Junior Essentials

For children 5 to 11 years

A truly flexible package covering many topics essential for building a good educational foundation. The areas covered have been carefully chosen by a team of experts and come from several subjects and levels of the National Curriculum.

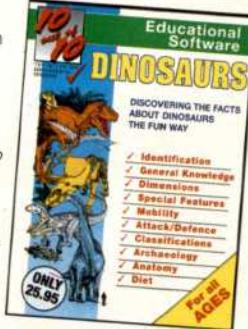
The child's progress in these areas is constantly monitored and recorded and parents or teachers can easily discover where a child needs help. As with all the 10 out of 10 series, further motivation to play the games and learn more is added in the form of High Score Tables.



## Dinosaurs

For all ages

This package is the fun way to learn the facts about dinosaurs. The six games all have superb digitised graphics to make a whole area of history - dinosaurs - come alive. If you came face to face with a tyrannosaurus would you run away? Or are you safe because it's a vegetarian and wouldn't eat you? This, together with 100s of other interesting facts, can be discovered from this enthralling package. The six games - all with single and multi-player options - are educational fun for everyone.



## Early Essentials

For children under 7 years

"Outstanding. All of the activities are not only very enjoyable but they're well thought through. It's one of the best multi-purpose infant packages I've seen in a long while. If you have young kids get it for the home. If you're a teacher, hammer on the headteacher's door and beg for money to buy a copy."

- Archimedes World (July '93)

"At just £25.95 you'll be hard pressed to find anything which even comes close to Early Essentials."

- Micro Computer Mart (Sept. '93)



## English

For children 6 to 16 years

"Everything being done is relevant to the player's education. An invaluable curriculum experience, plenty of fun, lots of variety."

- PC Home (November '93)

"Guaranteed to sustain the attention of even reluctant learners."

- RISC User (January/February '93)

"Most importantly, as the games are fun, children can't help but learn."

- Acorn Computing (March '93)

"Allows progression from Junior school age right up to GCSE level."

- Amiga User International (Sept. '93)

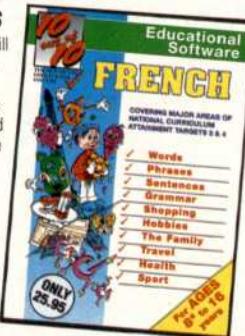


## French

For children 6 to 16 years

This suite of six educational games will give fun and motivation to all children learning French. The package is designed with the Modern Languages National Curriculum firmly in mind and contains many challenges to reinforce facts stated in Attainment Targets 3 and 4.

10 out of 10 French is essential for children on Key stages 3 and 4, but the numerous parent and teacher customisation options make the software suitable for all children - however young - who are learning the French language.

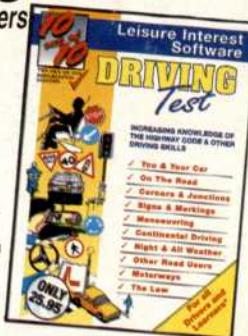


## Driving Test

For all drivers and learners

Whether you're a novice learner or an advanced expert, there's plenty you can learn from this package. There are thousands of built-in questions and you can choose whether you want to answer them directly or add to the fun by trying them within games.

The six games have been designed to be fun for all adults and include strategy, mental agility, coordination and more. And, if you think you are up to it, you can "take the test" - a challenge covering many areas of the Driving Test.



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## HOW TO ORDER ...

The 10 out of 10 Series is available for Acorn 32-bit computers (Archimedes), Commodore Amiga and IBM/PC and compatibles. At the time of going to press, titles marked  $\times$  were not available on all formats. Please ring for availability. Each package is ONLY £25.95 and you can order by CREDIT CARD, CHEQUE or EDUCATION AUTHORITY ORDER.

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The 10 out of 10 Series is available from all good computer software suppliers

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# **Infotainment**

Should the unthinkable happen and you tire of games, check out the Infotainment Supplement. There's something for everyone in Beginners' Paradise, Not The Games Review, The Blackboard and DIY The Easy Way.

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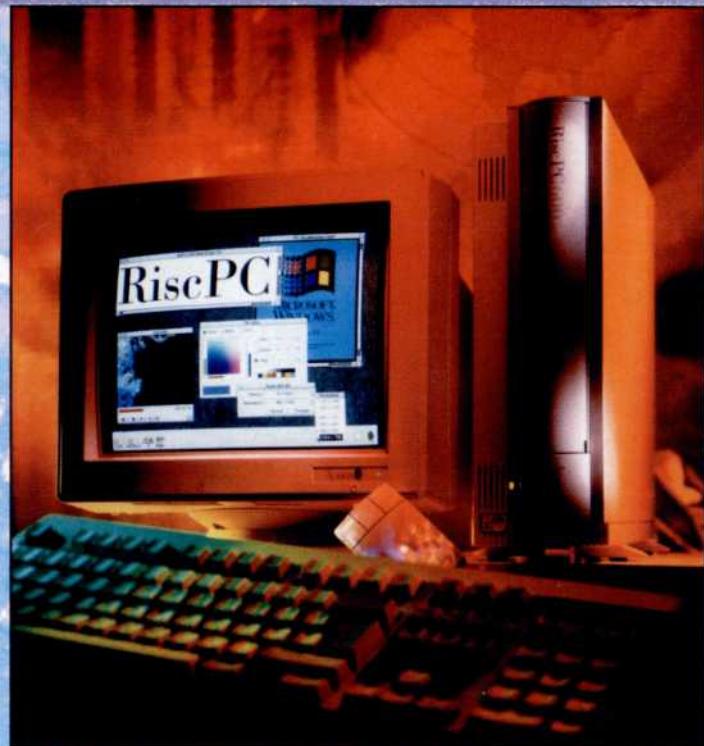
Welcome to the first densely

packed issue of *Acorn Action!* When the idea of launching an Acorn games magazine was first suggested, cynics thought the whole thing was side-splittingly hilarious and they told us so. "Games? What games?" they asked, referring to the reputation the Archimedes has miraculously acquired for being a boring classroom computer. Well, whatever you think about the past, it's all going to change from now on. The great revolution is in the air and will probably take place sometime next week.

US Gold, Gremlin, Renegade and Millennium have already taken up their positions in the Acorn world and are beginning to release their most popular games. Just take a look at some of the games reviewed in this issue - Flashback from US Gold, Premier Manager from Gremlin, Sensible Soccer from Renegade and Diggers from Millennium, not to mention Krisalis Software's latest conversion, Speedball 2.

*Acorn Action* has been launched at the prime time to cover these events and, as the only Acorn magazine dedicated to games, it is the only way to get full coverage. We've got 18 pages of full colour reviews for you in this issue alone. The plain fact is that more and more games are being produced all the time, and an ever increasing number of big companies are dipping their toes into the Acorn games market. It won't be long before Acorn computers are more popular as games systems than Segas and Nintendos combined. Ah well, one can only dream. Anyway, wipe the smile off your faces, cynics, because the bandwagon is gathering pace and you're not on it.

Sam Greenhill  
Editor



## ARCHIMEDES GAMES STRUGGLE ON RISC PC

The Risc PC has been billed as Acorn's 'next generation' computer. Will it bring with it a new generation of games?

The super-fast Risc PC contains a speedy



## SCRABBLE STRUGGLES TO SECURE ITS SCRUPLES

**E**vidence has come to light that suggests computers may yet have a mind of their own - and it sheds some light on exactly what the computer is thinking about. US Gold's

Scrabble has just been released for the Archimedes and Risc PC after weeks of rigorous play testing, and it was one of the testers who first noticed something odd. When the computer takes



ARM610 processor and a 24-bit graphics chip that gives 16 million colours on screen, making it the ideal games machine. The Risc PC was launched at the Harrogate Show in April and Acorn claims that over 90 per cent of existing Archimedes software will run on it perfectly. But which 90 per cent? Not, the answer seems to be, many games.

The trouble is that most existing Archimedes games stretch the computer to its limits to maximise speed and graphical detail. Unfortunately for games players, the Risc PC contains new hardware that stretches the machine in different directions.

Consequently, a large number of entertainment titles refuse to work, although many new games - such as Flashback - have been designed to take account of the new technology and work flawlessly.

Acorn's Richard Percy said: "All our registered developers were aware of the new range well before its launch and had time to adjust their games to make them work. However, some games have been released by non-registered developers who didn't know about the new machine. Whether these ones work or not is basically down to luck."

Acorn Action will be examining the games scene on the Risc PC in the next issue.

part in a game it apparently has an uncanny tendency to use letters that make up swear words.

David Acton, who converted Scrabble, said: "The game doesn't have any particular weighting towards swearing but it just so happens that swear words make good Scrabble words."

In a recent test game, the whizz-brain computer notched up an amazing - and perhaps revealing - score of 666, thanks in part to its foul mouth.

But US Gold is quick to defend its hot new title. "Children are unlikely to encounter these words because they don't tend to get used on lower levels of the game," said US Gold's Bridgett Hirst.

"All the words are from the official Scrabble dictionary that anyone can use. The game certainly doesn't have a mind of its own, it just naturally picks the words that score the highest points. If that happens to be a swear word then so be it."

She added: "The computer doesn't blush."



Another foul outburst is brewing as the computer searches through its ugly lexicon.



## NO SHOW FOR SIMON THE SORCERER

Visitors to the Easter Harrogate show who were disappointed to find that Simon the Sorcerer was not available can at last go out and buy it - in theory.

Unfortunately, the blockbuster from GamesWare wasn't ready in time for the show, despite desperate last minute attempts to have something ready for the hungry graphic adventure fans who turned up for a copy.

The huge nine-disc megagame is so big that GamesWare underestimated just how long it would take to finish. Even when the Harrogate show was in full swing, despairing GamesWare boffins were camped out in nearby lodgings with their computers, frantically working shifts to try and cobble something together for the crowds, without success.

"It's all very well finishing the game, but we still have to test it," explained Andrew Foyle of Vertical Twist, the company that is converting Simon the Sorcerer to the Archimedes.

"The 7.2Mb game has so many thousands of animation sequences and different possible solutions that it could almost take forever to test."

But Andrew made a commitment nonetheless. "It isn't as behind schedule as the Channel Tunnel and we haven't overspent by as much - yet. Barring international catastrophe or World War 3 breaking out, Simon the Sorcerer will be out by early June at the latest. I'll put my head on the block if it isn't."

# ALL DUNE TO THE TIMING

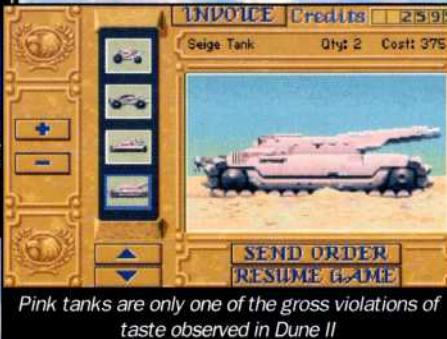
**D**une II, the hugely successful PC megagame, is set for release this autumn - barring Simon The Sorcerer style super complications. The conversion is being done by GamesWare, and sources inside the company are very confident that the game will not be beset by the delays currently besetting Simon the Sorcerer (see NewsBeat p7).



More war on Dune II, coming to an Acorn near you



Making you an offer you just can't refuse



Pink tanks are only one of the gross violations of taste observed in Dune II

Based on Frank Herbert's very popular Dune novels and a disastrous David Lynch movie, Dune II is a rare example of a computer game being more entertaining than the film. Set several thousand years in the future on a desert planet called Arrakis, the plot revolves around a valuable spice called melange. Arrakis is, as one would expect, the only planet in the entire universe where this

spice can be found, with the result that there is a considerable amount of

## Sentry: bigger and better than Warlocks

**N**etwork 23, the company behind the excellent arcade adventure game Warlocks, has very kindly provided Acorn Action with exclusive details about its forthcoming new game, Sentry.

Sentry's plot at the moment goes something like this (the game is still under development so the plot may change):

The people of the Malthorm solar system were a race very much like humans. They abused their

planets with pollution and war, and realised too late the irreparable damage they had done. The only chance the planets had was to be left alone for thousands of years while their ecosystems gradually repaired themselves. Huge spaceships were thus constructed over several decades, designed to carry the entire population from the five planets of Malthorm. An elite army of Sentry robots was



**SENTRY** ©1994  
V1.3 NETWORK 23

assembled and left to guard the Malthorm system until the return of the people.

Thousands of years past and most of the Sentry army

fell into disuse, but the planets slowly started to heal. That is until one day when an enormous alien warship entered the system.



bickering between parties interested in owning the spice. You are the head of one of the royal houses of Arrakis and command a spice harvesting force whose mission is to take control of as large an area of Arrakis as possible. Using Sim City-style construction, you have to build your refinery and surround it with processing plants, barracks, energy generators and defensive installations in order to protect it from other houses that have the same intentions as you. You then have to create and manage entire armies so that you can prevent attacks on your territory, and send out into the hostile wilderness in order to find more spice.

Dune II is a massive game - the PC version is supplied on a CD-ROM - but as with Simon the Sorcerer, GamesWare plans to release the Acorn version on both disc and CD.

Makes sure you watch this space for further information about Dune II.



While this geezer has the fashion sense of a Lemming in a bathrobe

## GAMESWARE HAMSTERS GO APE IN MY BATHROOM



We're all Hamster crazy

**and Square Route - and it looks set to be an absolute winner.**

In Hamsters, the world has been overrun by a plague of cute furry little animals, and your only chance of saving it is with your trusty mallet. Written by Tom Cooper of Dinosaw fame, Hamsters features some of the wackiest graphics and sound effects ever seen on the Archimedes. Blowpipe has been around for quite a while now, and is an implementation of the classic horizontal shoot-'em-up with over 2.5Mb of 256 colour graphics. Quizmaster is, as its name suggests, a quiz game for 1 to 4 people, with over 2,000 questions from a choice of eight categories. Square Route, a Tetris-type game, is claimed to be a hopelessly addictive puzzle game.

The Zodiac - Aries pack costs £29.99 ex. VAT and is available from GamesWare, tel. 0706 456523, and most Acorn dealers.

The aliens had been studying the planets for years and decided the time was right to claim them as their own. They descended on the planets and wiped out the remaining sentries who were old and fragile.

All would have been lost for the Malthorm system were it not for a lone sentry who, due to a defect, had not been operational until now. Fresh as you were meant to be all those thousands of years

ago, the fate of an entire solar system rests with you... The Last Sentry.



**SENTRY** ©1994 U1.3 NETWORK 23

According to Network 23's graphics wizard and spokesperson, Russell Hughes, Sentry is 3 times bigger than Warlocks, and like its predecessor, boasts 256 colour graphics and 8-directional



**SENTRY** ©1994 U1.3 NETWORK 23

parallax scrolling running at 50 cycles per second. In addition it will have "six beautiful guardians all lovingly animated and far more sophisticated than those from Warlocks," and

"loads of hidden chambers and rooms with the possibility of entire hidden levels!" Acorn Action will be bringing you a demonstration version of Sentry just as soon as we can get our sticky paws it.

# ACORN ACTION



You are now the proud owner of yet another disc: size - 3 1/2", colour-blue, material - plastic. We have taken the radical and unusual step of sticking a label on it. This should help you to identify the disc easily in the unfortunate event that you mislay it.

Although from the outside this disc may look rather plain, even with its devastatingly

handsome label, this is no ordinary disc. It is the ActionDisc - the disc exclusively for readers of Acorn Action.

In order to obtain maximum satisfaction and enjoyment from the ActionDisc, we recommend that you obey the following simple rules:

- 1) Treat your ActionDisc with respect - it has feelings just like you.
- 2) Do not attempt to grill, fry, bake, barbecue or boil your ActionDisc in a

microwave, or any other cooking utensil for that matter. Discs, no matter whether they be the superior

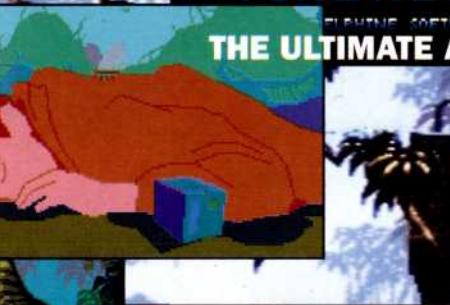
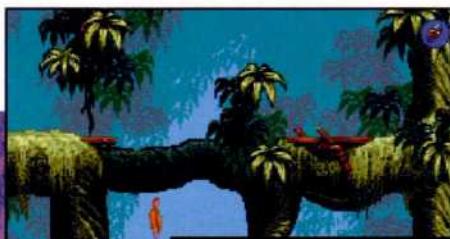
ActionDisc type or the ordinary type, do not taste good either cold or hot.

- 3) Do not attempt to bathe your ActionDisc. The disc suffers from severe hydrophobia and will probably seize up permanently at the first contact with water.
- 4) Do not insert the ActionDisc in an Amiga, Atari or PC. Although the disc will suffer no physical damage, mentally and emotionally it will be scared for life.

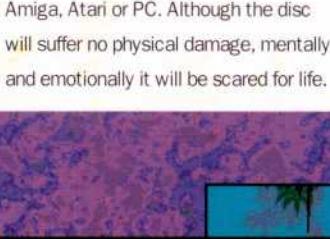
- 5) Show your disc the true meaning of life - introduce it to your Archimedes or Risc PC.

The very first ActionDisc comes jam packed with not that many items. But it is a definite case of quality before quantity.

So what are you waiting for? Stick it in your computer and give it the time of its life!



**F**lashback is without doubt the most exciting game ever to reach Acornland. A smash hit on almost every other computer it has been released for, US Gold has now converted it to run on all Acorn 32-bit



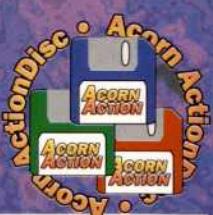
computers, including the Risc PC. We all think that Flashback is absolutely, totally, completely over-the-top stunning.

In fact we were so impressed with it that we decided it be the perfect game for the first ActionDisc. Unfortunately US Gold wouldn't give us the whole game, so we had to

settle for a playable demo version instead. (Well we don't always get what we want in life.)

What's the demo version about? For a full description of the game, see the review in the reviews

# ACTIONDISC



## DR PHIPP'S HINTS AND TIPS

Directly from that most canine of companies, DoggySoft, comes the ultimate utility for games players. It's called Hacker, and it allows you to create your own cheats for almost any type of game. As a bonus, we've thrown in several Hacker cheat modules for the most popular games around. Information on how to use Hacker can be obtained by clicking on Help in the Filer menu.

## ACORN ACTION BACKDROP

This is a little application for RISC OS 2 users who want to participate in Mike Williams' Project Series in the Infotainment Supplement. It provides a single function of RISC OS 3's Pinboard sticky backdrop - allowing you to display a sprite either tiled, scaled or centred behind all your windows on the Desktop. For more information on using this program, see the article in the supplement and read AABackdrop's help file on the disc.

## YOU AND YOUR ACTIONDISC

We've tried to make the ActionDisc as simple as possible to use. There's no complex menu system to learn, and as a result, we can give you more useful programs, such as games (well this is a games magazine!). We know that many of you don't own hard drives, so we've ensured that all the programs will run directly from the disc. However, in order to save space, we haven't included the System or Scrap applications on the disc. Therefore before you use the ActionDisc, insert the disc that contains your copies of the System and Scrap applications and double-click on each of them. Now remove that disc and insert the ActionDisc. Click on the disc drive icon on the icon bar and after a few seconds the contents of the disc will be displayed in a Filer window on the Desktop. To run any of the applications, simply double-click on their icons.

## USING COMPRESSED APPLICATIONS

In certain cases we may have had to compress an application in order to fit it on the disc. We have attempted to make the decompression process totally transparent so that you won't even know that the program has been compressed. However, certain programs may refuse to run when compressed. In these cases, when you double-click on the application, a window will appear asking you to drag the contents of a specified Filer window onto a blank disc. If you follow the instructions, you should have no problems at all.

## GETTING MORE HELP

To obtain help on any of the programs on the ActionDisc, click Menu over the program's icon in the Filer window and move the mouse pointer over the arrow to the right of the 2nd menu item. If for example you clicked Menu over the Flashdemo icon, the 2nd item would be "App. !Flashdemo". The application menu will now open, and the sixth item in this menu is Help. Simply click on this to get comprehensive help on the chosen application.

## IF YOUR DISC DOESN'T WORK

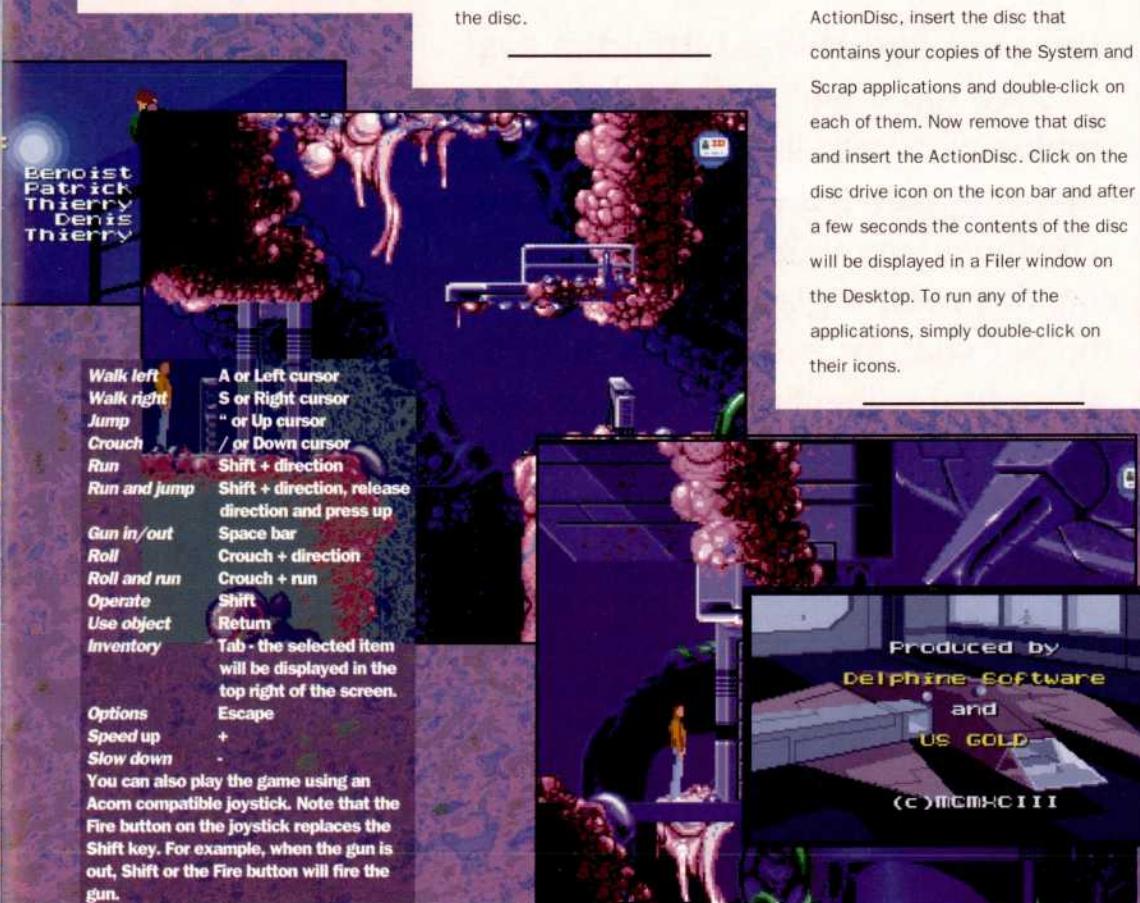
If your ActionDisc won't work, giving you 'Disc error' or 'Disc fault' messages, please return the disc for a replacement to:

Acorn Action, 117 Hatfield Road,  
St Albans AL1 4JS

If an application on the ActionDisc refuses to work with your computer, don't send the disc back immediately. Write to us describing the problem, what type of computer and monitor you have, and what other programs and modules are running when you attempt to use the offending program.

And that's all we're going to tell you. The rest you'll have to work out for yourselves.

We hope that you find this Flashback demo as enjoyable and entertaining as we did. We just can't wait to get hold of the full version. You can contact US Gold on 021 356 3388 to find out if it's available.



section. For now, let's just assume that the object is to stay alive. Easier said than done. You've got off to a pretty bad start already, being shot down over a hostile planet, waking up in the middle of a jungle and discovering that you've obtained a nasty case of amnesia. By the way, in case you don't remember, your name is Conrad B. Hart.

Start exploring. It's the easiest way to get used to the controls. If you fall off a ledge, you can climb back up

again by standing underneath the ledge and holding down the jump key. To jump across a wide gap between two ledges, hold down Shift and press the up key, then hold down the up key in order to pull yourself onto the ledge.

A couple of ledges beneath where you wake up, you'll find a Holocube. This little device will prove very useful, but you'll have to find it yourself to hear what it has to say and discover the exact nature of your mission.

On your journey through the jungle you'll meet many creatures, a couple of whom will be friendly, the majority distinctly unpleasant. So whip out your gun and show them who's boss. You'll find it much easier to shoot a mechanical monster if you wait until it pokes its antenna out before blasting it away.

Keep an eye open for shields and cartridges; these are vitally important if you want to complete the demo level, and both can be recharged in the energy generators.

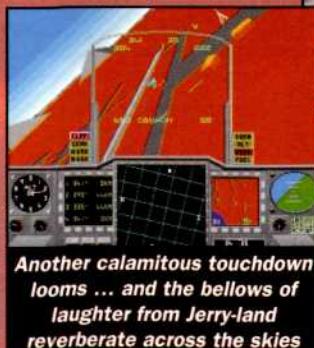
# FOCUS: BIRDS OF WAR

## SKIES OF FIRE: a pilot's guide

**J**ERRY MUST be laughing. Or at least not know whether to laugh or cry. I can launch my super smooth fighter off the runway, slice through the blue sky to Jerry's airfield and wipe out half the enemy squadron, sink all their ships and take on the bogies with one eye shut before circling round and flying victoriously home.

With the wind behind me and my jet unscathed I will reach the cheering crowds waiting to celebrate my return in no time. But can I land at my own runway? Can I let down the landing gear and drop gently on to the tarmac for a grand old hero's welcome? Like hell. Landing the blinking plane is the hardest part of the whole mission and must send Jerry into fits of spontaneous laughter to see me write off my fighter every time I go for the touchdown. It's consolation for the enemy but just humiliation for everyone else. So what can the demoralised pilot do to get down in one piece? And having mastered this what about the other pitfalls of the game? Read on for the hottest tips and sneakiest hints for playing The Fourth Dimension's Birds of War. If you don't, you'll get no sympathy when your baby goes down nose first...

Love 'em or hate 'em, Birds of War has got to be the best flight simulator for the Archimedes. Although as a simulator it may not be absolutely perfect, the attention to detail is astounding:



32 different warplanes, 24 military campaigns covering the entire history of aviation, 192 very different missions and over 40 weapons of various types. The weather may be sunny and fine or windy, dark and rainy. The landscape varies from deep cavernous valleys to rivers and seas. Helicopters, aircraft carriers, Hercules bombers, jet



*Our man gets set to take out a couple of enemy subs*

fighters, trains, trucks, tanks... I could go on for pages, but I won't! Because unless we figure out the landing problem you won't see half of these features.

**Has your Bird of War bitten the dust once too often? Are you having trouble with your landings? Does your chewing gum lose its flavour on the bedpost overnight? Sam Greenhill dons his aviator glasses and hops into the hot seat for a journey through the skies that will enlighten the enraged Birds of War pilot, intrigue the flight sim fans and do nothing at all for people who like chewing gum.**

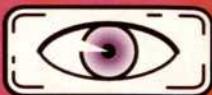
### LANDING PROBLEM

The landing problem can be stated quite simply: It is almost impossible to land. For the first few days of playing Birds of War I felt like Bill Murray in the film Groundhog Day. Do you remember the scene when

he's so bored of reliving the same day over and over again that he sits on a wall and predicts exactly what is about to happen around him? Bill says "Dog barks..." and a nearby dog obliges with a woof. He says "Car..." and a car passes, and so on.

Same thing happens with Mission 1 of the North Cape 1987 campaign. I grab an F/A 18 Hornet out of the hanger, load up a bundle of Penguin-3 air-to-surface missiles and blast off into the skies. Turn 50 degrees to the right, head out to the target, reduce air-speed, go in low, missile-lock on the gun boats, let rip, big explosions, gun boats destroyed, mission completed, circle round, fly westwards and head for home. And crash. And crash. And crash. Every time. No problem.





After the 83rd time I got so bored of the same monotonous routine that always ended in disaster I nearly did a Bill Murray and stepped out in front of the first passing lorry.

## LANDING SOLUTION

The manual, it must be said, is unhelpful. Forget the 5km run up to the landing, you need a good 15km to be in with a chance. The best strategy is to fly back from the mission due West, to a point about 30km due north of the runway. Use the waypoint indicator on the tape compass (on the HUD) to direct you to the runway. By the way, the W key toggles between the various waypoints -

this was omitted from the manual in error!

As you approach the airfield switch on the Instrument Landing System by pressing I. This will help you line up parallel

with the runway. Now reduce the power to about 50 per cent, lower the flaps so the flaps indicator shines green, let down the landing gear and put on the wheel brakes. You're ready for touchdown. Lose height gradually so that you're flying at about 400 feet when you're 4km away, 300 at 3km

and so on, and reduce speed so that you enter the landing field area doing about 240 knots (or whatever speed is about 40 knots above stall-speed). By the time you reach the runway you want to be about eight centimetres off the ground and losing speed fast! Cut the engines and just nose dive the runway, even if your plane is slightly skew - don't try to straighten up now. Once your wheels are on the ground the main problem is stopping before reaching the other end of the runway. Unfortunately there's nothing you can do except pray and keep the plane straight by using the left and right cursor keys. The trick is to touch down at the very beginning of the runway, not half way along it like they do in real life. Oh, and one other tip, make sure the landings are set to 'easy'! Don't even think about setting them to 'realistic'...



Latest odds are 236-1 on this missile actually hitting its target

## THE SAVINGS SCAM

You've landed successfully and made it to the next mission - well done! But unless you use the Acorn Action savings scam

you are about to become mightily upset, for as soon as you muck up Mission 2 the dastardly game will shove you screaming back to Bill Murray country again, the start of Mission 1... So here's what you do.

1 From the Desktop, go to the directory where you keep Birds of War and get into the !BirdOfWar application by double clicking on its icon while holding down Shift.

2 Find the file called Pilots lurking in the directory. This contains information about which

mission you are currently on.

3 To avoid the game returning you to Mission 1 each time you crash, simply leave the game whenever you successfully complete a mission and backup this file by copying it to somewhere safe.

4 Should you now crash, retrieve the Pilots file that you copied somewhere safe in the last step and copy it back into the !BirdOfWar application. Voila!



Copy your Pilots file to a backup directory. Here, each time the file is copied it is given a new name - 87mis4 means the campaign is North Cape 1987, Mission No. 4

The Acorn Action savings scam can literally bring you back from the dead!



# Focus: BIRDS OF WAR

## FIVE OF ACORN ACTION'S TOP GUN TIPS



*Our man gets set to take out a couple of enemy subs*

### 1 AIRCRAFT CARRIER TAKE-OFFS:

Don't forget to lower the flaps before attempting take off!

### 2 AIRCRAFT CARRIER LANDINGS:

On my version, some git has tampered with the aircraft carriers and they seem to lack the crucial trip wire that catches your plane on landing and stops you from hurtling straight off the other end into the sea. A minor setback. Just use the long part of the deck, not the marked runway, and make sure you touchdown as soon as possible doing about 1 knot more than the stall speed!

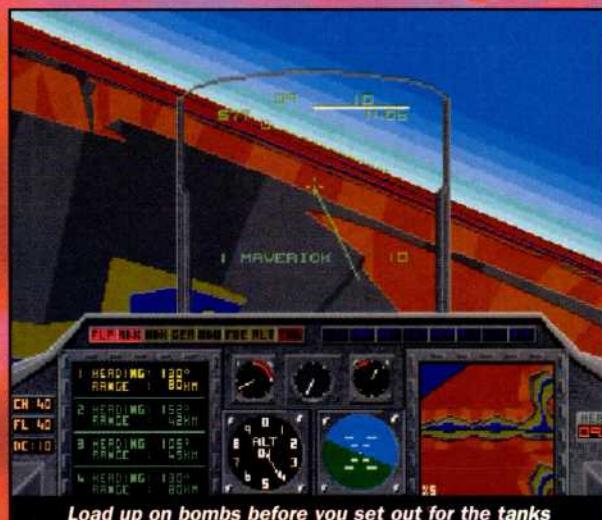
### 3 BOMBS:

Fun but very tricky. For some water-based targets you can use a missile instead and 'fire and forget'.

Try loading up the heavy duty AGM-84A Harpoon as a bomb-substitute that the enemy will never forget.

### 4 TANKS:

There is one mission in the North Cape 1987 campaign that takes place in the middle of a miserable night when it's raining cats and dogs. A bunch of tanks has congregated on the shore line and they need to be blown to little pieces. An air-to-ground missile is the most obvious weapon to use here but the tanks are so small that the stupid things hardly ever find their target. So much for 'fire and forget'. I'm afraid the best way round this is to cheat and cheat like hell. Infinite ammo can be selected from the options screen and it means you can pump a dozen air-to-ground missiles at each tank without worrying about supplies. Even the author of Birds of War, John Whigham, confesses he does this himself.



*Load up on bombs before you set out for the tanks*

"It is possible in theory to do it without though," he claims. Yeah, sure. Just try not to be tempted into leaving it permanently switched to infinite.



### 5 STEALTH:

John Whigham is very keen on the Stealth Bomber in the 1990s era. Don't discount it, he says, just because it has few weapon bays and can't fly very fast. For attacking near SAM sites and hostile air space, the Stealth is a gem

that will get you almost anywhere undetected, its sleek body making it impervious to radar. "Everyone should have a Stealth," says John happily.



*Stealth. Have you got yours?*

## FINALLY...

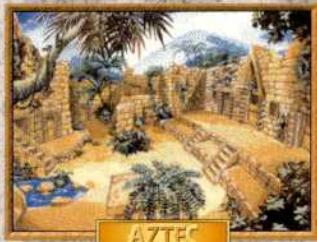
If you have any cheats, hints or tips for Birds of War, or any other game for that matter, please send in the details.

The address is: Acorn Action, 117 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4JS. And finally, remember that getting stuck in a game is very rare and only features occasionally in our reconstructions. So please, don't have nightmares.

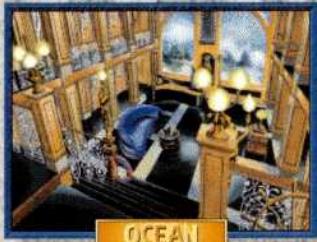
# PICK YOUR PLAYERS



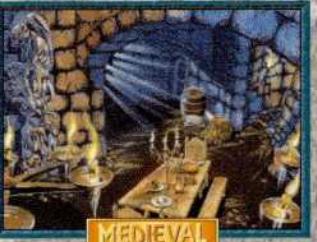
# ZOOM INTO A ZONE



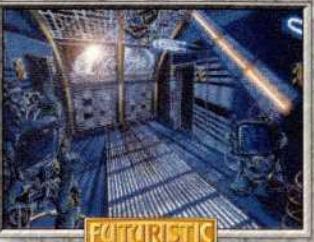
AZTEC



OCEAN

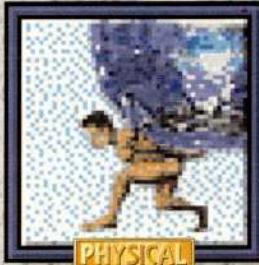


MEDIEVAL



FUTURISTIC

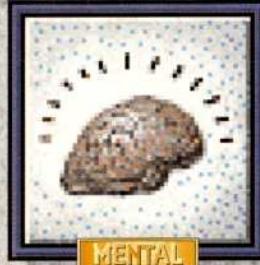
# GO FOR A GAME



PHYSICAL



SKILL

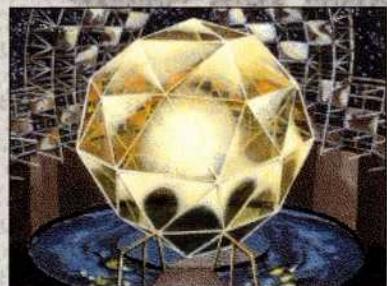


MENTAL



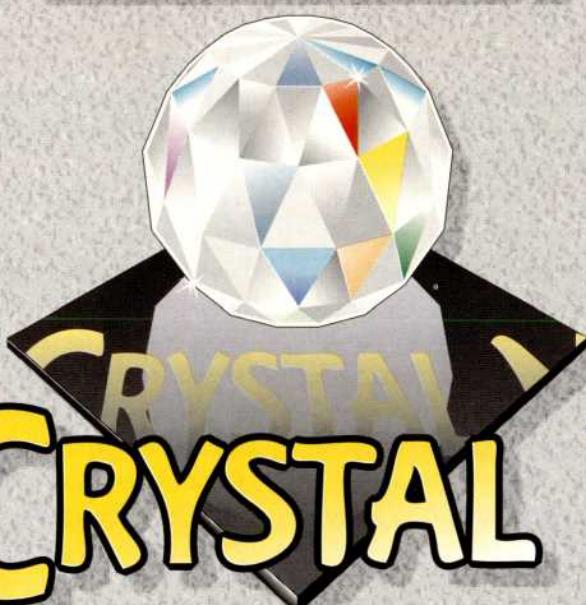
MYSTERY

# FACE THE FINAL CHALLENGE



'The Crystal Maze is fantastic. The graphics and sound are stunning, the puzzles and games very playable and challenging.....'

*Risc User, December 1993*



'The Crystal Maze is a must for everyone from lovers of mind bending puzzles to joystick-frenzy enthusiasts'

*Acorn Computing October 1993*

# THE CRYSTAL MAZE

The Crystal Maze is available exclusively for Acorn 32 bit computers.

  
£39.95 (inc VAT) from  
Sherston Software  
Swan Barton, Sherston,  
Wiltshire SN16 0LH  
Tel 0666 840433  
Fax 0666 840048

Please send me    copy of The Crystal Maze® at £39.95 inc VAT

Name

Address

Post Code

Visa/Access:

Exp. Date:

Signed

The Crystal Maze is a Chatsworth Television production for Channel 4 based on ideas by Jacques Antoine © 1990

# Focus: US GOLD

I really did try hard. Never having driven further north than Cambridge, the prospect of negotiating the infamous spaghetti junction filled me with dread. Butterflies performed death defying acrobatic stunts in my stomach as I approached the beast. And then it was all over. I'd done it, correct exit and all. In a haze of self-congratulating I turned left into Holford Way. Two miles later and not a sign of the building anywhere I finally deciphered my scrawled directions: "Turn right into Holford Way, US Gold is on the left."

One of the most enjoyable benefits of being a journalist, apart from the far too infrequent free lunches (editor please note), is that you get the opportunity to visit companies, see top secret products under development, meet the people behind them and have a good chinwag about the general state of the nation over numerous cups of coffee and, if you're lucky, smoked salmon sandwiches. On this occasion, as you may have already gathered, I was on my way to US Gold to see Flashback and Scrabble and to get to know the company.

My host for the day was Bridgett Hirst, US Gold's Communications Manager and the lifeline between the hacks and the hackers. She explained, once I'd sheepishly described the cause of my lateness, that they hadn't been able to send me printed directions because the company had only just moved into its new headquarters in Holford. Once we'd ventured out of the pristine reception area, replete with awards and certificates that the company's many games have received, into the heart of the company, signs of the move became visible everywhere. Boxes propped up walls propped up posters which

gave a pictorial history of the company.

Over the past decade, the name US Gold has become synonymous with games of outstanding quality, and during the BBC micro's heyday, few Beeb owners would not have heard of US Gold and classic games from its stable such as Bounty Bob, Beach Head and Bruce Lee. I even remember the days when US Gold used to run double-page full colour adverts in Acorn User magazine, and I'm not that old.

Today, US Gold is one of the world's biggest and most well known games companies. Its parent company, Centregold, is listed on the stock market and capitalised at £50.3 million, and it has been said that for every £5 spent on games, £1 is on a US Gold product.

Whether or not this is a totally accurate figure is beside the point really. Browsing through US Gold's 1993/94 catalogue, which



contains no less than thirty titles, it is easy to see why this company is so successful. The catalogue contains blockbuster games such as Street Fighter II, Winter Olympics, Sam and Max Hit the Road and Day of the Tentacle, in addition to the two with which US Gold has now blessed Acorn users: Flashback and Scrabble. More importantly and impressively, the company's products cover the entire spectrum of game genres, from arcade adventure to shoot-em-ups, strategy and role-playing.

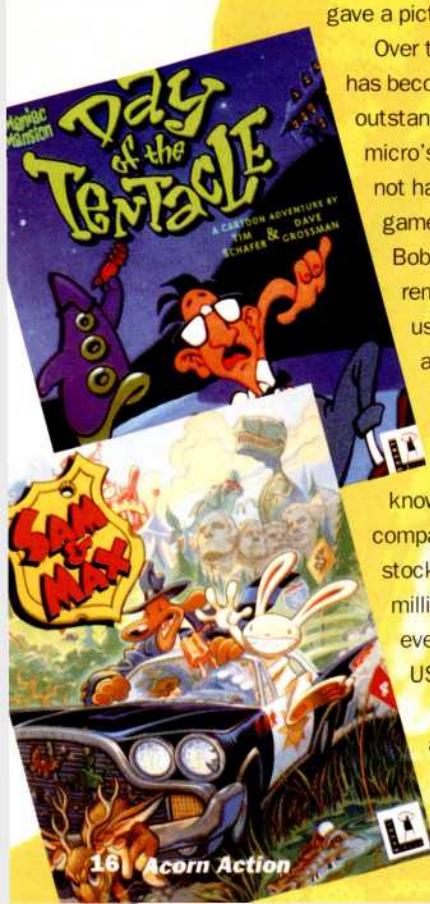
Recently in the line of duty - I promise that I didn't enjoy the experience at all - I was browsing through an Amiga magazine and came across a set of charts containing over 900 games divided into the different game categories. In the role-playing section alone, US Gold's name appeared seventeen times among the 45 entries. And in the same magazine's 'budget games' chart, US Gold's budget label Kixx had titles in seven of the top twenty positions, including first place.

In the days before Flashback and Scrabble however, US Gold's involvement with the Archimedes was disappointing to say the least - both for Acorn users and the company itself. Quite a few years ago the company converted the then world class golf simulation Leaderboard to the Archimedes. It arrived with little hype or fanfare and was met with an extraordinary degree of apathy by Acorn games players. Considering that Leaderboard had been, and still is, one of US Gold's biggest selling games, coming a close second to the popular racing game OutRun, it wasn't surprising that US Gold turned tail and fled.

Things have changed a bit since then. A couple of hundred thousand more Acorn systems have been sold and the name Acorn is no longer associated solely with education. But is this all that's been necessary to coax US Gold to tentatively dip its toes into the Acorn waters again.

Ask US Gold, and in fact Millennium, Renegade and Gremlin as well, their reasons for returning to the Acorn market, and it's more than likely they'll mumble, behind their hands, something along the lines of, "er, well, uh, we believe that there are enough Acorn games players to make the venture worthwhile for us, cough, cough." However much we at Acorn Action would like this to be the case, the reality is somewhat different. These companies are very sceptical about the Acorn market, and it's only thanks to a lot of encouragement by Acorn itself that they've decided to come back. It's not as if Acorn computers don't make good games systems or are difficult to convert games to work on. In fact Bridgett said that the gurus at US Gold were highly impressed with the speed at which the programmers were able to convert Flashback and Scrabble to the Arc. (Comparisons to the speed at which a certain game with the initials S.T.S(nail) has been converted to the Arc seem appropriate here.)

The main problem that big games companies have with the Acorn market is numbers. There are approximately six million Amiga users. Hypothetically, if US Gold released a bad game that only 1% of all Amiga users purchased, the company could still get at least 60,000





sales. Sadly, for a game, even if it were Sonic the Hedgehog, to sell half this number on the Archimedes would require nothing short of a miracle, and many Acorn games companies are ecstatically happy if their sales figures hit the four figure mark.

## A PUBLISHING COMPANY

Considering the quantity of software that emanates from this company, it comes as quite a surprise to learn that US Gold doesn't actually have any in-house programmers. US Gold is, in fact, remarkably similar to a book publisher. It primarily takes games from other companies, polishes them until they sparkle, giving them the 'US Gold-en touch', and releases them to a hungry multitude of games players. In addition to marketing games from companies such as the French developer Delphine Software and American household names such as LucasArts, MicroPose and Sierra, it commissions programmers and programming companies to write games and do conversions. Flashback was converted to the Acorn platform by none other than the well known Acorn User columnist Dave Lawrence.

Instead of having editors, US Gold has development coordinators and production managers. The role of the development coordinator is to ensure that a game is as near to perfect as possible when it reaches you and me. To this end, US Gold will spend anything up to 600 hours testing a game before releasing it. At around £7 per hour (games testers do reasonably well for themselves) it's not exactly a cheap exercise, and well beyond the budgets of most Acorn companies.

It does make a pleasant change to meet a company whose employees put so much emphasis on game quality. On several occasions I have binned games from certain companies who shall remain nameless, for the sole reason that the company responsible hadn't bothered to ensure that the game will work correctly on my model of computer. If a game doesn't work on my system, then how many other users are going to struggle to get the game to work?

The production manager has the responsibility of monitoring a product from concept to shelf. This involves preparing the packaging and manual, and ensuring that all the bits and pieces that combined form a professional looking product, conform to the US Gold 'house style' - do all the logos and copyright notices appear in the correct places, and does the game conform to the conditions of the various licences?

In preparing a manual for a game, the production department will take the basic instructions from the programmers, and turn them into a manual that is entertaining, instructive and understandable. US Gold places a very heavy emphasis on adding value to a game, believing that this is one of the best methods of combating software piracy. I agree with them totally. I am far more likely to spend my money on a high quality, bug-free game that comes with a well thought out and professionally printed manual, than on something that looks as if it's been thrown together in a garden shed.

## THE STORY OF SUCCESS

The seeds from which US Gold grew were sown way back in the infancy of home computing. Geoff Brown, the company's founder and now the head of the British games industry's only public limited company, is a former musician and teacher. During his illustrious(?) musical days, his band had drummers the likes of Carl Palmer, then aged 16 and a half, (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) and Mel Gaynor, later to achieve stardom in Simple Minds. The band didn't last however, and Geoff ended up twiddling his thumbs with an Atari 800, £200 in the piggy bank, and no games at all. So he did what most successful British entrepreneurs do, and went shopping in the good ol' US of A. He returned, unsurprisingly, with £200 of Atari 800 games, sold them for a profit, bought some more, and sold them for even more, in very much the same process that one makes money in Elite. This little exercise gave birth to Centresoft, which is now the biggest distributor of computer games in the UK.

In those early days, Centresoft only imported games from the US. But Geoff soon discovered that the American games market was growing a lot faster than the local one, and while British Commodore 64 gamers were still entertaining their ears with the sweet sounds of cassette, the games that were arriving from the States came on disc. So Geoff went back to the States and asked the companies from which he was importing the games if he could have a licence to put them on cassette. And thus was born US Gold, the label under which these British duplicated cassette games were sold.

The US Gold label went down a storm, and very soon American



companies were queuing up at Geoff's door asking him to be their British and European distributor. As few of these companies had ever heard of computers such as the Spectrum and Amstrad, US Gold

started to convert the games to these formats as well, so opening up a huge new market for itself. In order to support the European market, US Gold also had to turn its hand to translating the manuals and packaging into foreign languages. Through this process, US Gold became possibly the first games company to have a global presence.

There are many people in the great wide world who have asked us whether the Acorn market is big enough to support a dedicated games magazine. At Acorn Action, we believe very strongly that it is. We also know that it can only grow if companies like US Gold support the market by bringing us top-quality games. They are only going to do this if you support them. Think about it!

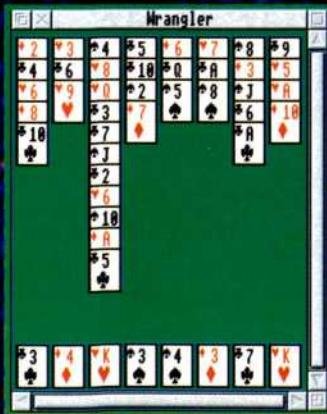
# RiscAction!

a special games collection from 32-bit Action to get your finger's tapping and your mind racing!  
**RiscAction** is a collection of seven super games ranging from exciting shoot-em-ups to desktop brain-teasers. Each of these games is a gem in its own right, and we are offering all seven for the incredible price of £14.95!

Remember Defender, one of the all-time classic arcade games? Now the game has been brought bang up to date for your Acorn computer with **Humanoids**. All the original features are there - just watch the aliens gang up on you as you pilot your craft furiously across the face of the planet in a desperate attempt to save the humanoids!



As if this were not enough action for one disc, **Robotix** is written by the same author as **Humanoids**, and so promises the same high level of excitement. The action is fast and furious as you dash about the screen rescuing other humans from murderous alien robots with your multi-directional laser weapon!

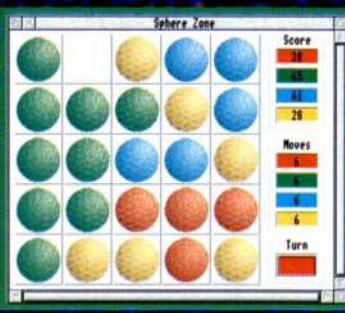


When you need a breather, try **Wrangler**, which is a super desktop implementation of one of the most addictive forms of Patience ever devised. Be warned - once you start you will find it hard to stop!



**Cretin** is an excellent implementation of Tetris, one of the most popular computer games ever written. This version has a very impressive scrolling background and a soundtrack that is sure to drive you mad!

**Shells** is a game for two players, who take it in turns to fire shells across a random landscape in an attempt to destroy their opponent's cannon. Super graphics and a high skill factor make this a game with a difference!



**RiscAction** is available now for only £14.95 (inc. VAT).

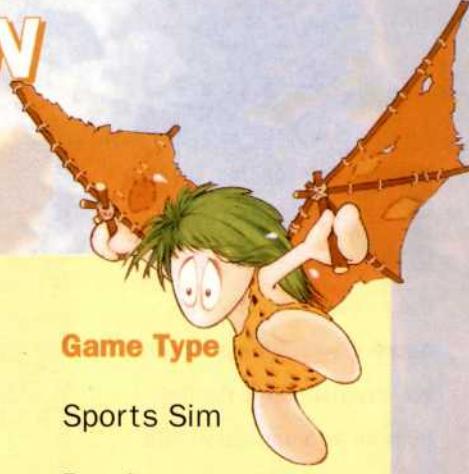
Please add £1.00 for postage and quote product code **PRA1**.

32-Bit Action, 117 Hatfield Road, St Albans AL1 4JS  
Telesales: **0727 840305**

**Boffin** is a high-quality graphical ladders-and-levels-type adventure game containing dozens of puzzles that must be completed in the right sequence. Can you guide the professor to safety, avoiding the acid drops, baddies and glass beakers? Get caught in a glass beaker and there is no escape!



# The Acorn Action Super League



No.	Game	Publisher	RRP	Game Type
1	<b>Sensible Soccer</b>	Renegade	£22.12	Sports Sim
2	<b>Lemmings 2 - Tribes</b>	Krisalis	£25.52	Puzzle
3	<b>Premier Manager</b>	Gremlin Graphics	£25.99	Sports Sim
4	<b>Crystal Maze</b>	Sherston	£34.00	Strategy
5	<b>Sim City</b>	Krisalis	£29.78	Strategy
6	<b>Speedball 2</b>	Krisalis	£29.99	Arcade/Sports Sim
7	<b>Diggers</b>	Millennium	£29.99	Puzzle
8	<b>Magic Pockets</b>	Renegade	£22.12	Platform
9	<b>Lotus Turbo Challenge 2</b>	Krisalis	£22.12	Sports Sim
10	<b>Birds of War</b>	Fourth Dimension	£29.75	Flight Sim



This is it! The very first official 32-bit Acorn Games Chart. These are the top ten games bought by you over the past two months. Sensible Soccer has done the same thing it did in all other game charts - it has shot straight to the big number 1. Lemmings 2 continues to remain a hot favourite in the games world, while budding football managers are having a field day with Premier Manager. Crystal Maze just pipped surprise entry Sim City to 4th place, and Speedball 2 and Diggers have been slugging it out for the next position. The bubblegum chewing Bitmap Kid has stuck Magic Pockets in at number 8, while the racing classic Lotus Challenge still has Formula 1 fanatics driving round the bend. Birds of War, the mega flight simulator with more meat than (a rhino on heat) an elephant, unsurprisingly has a place in the chart, but only just. James Pond 2 and Heimdall are very close behind.



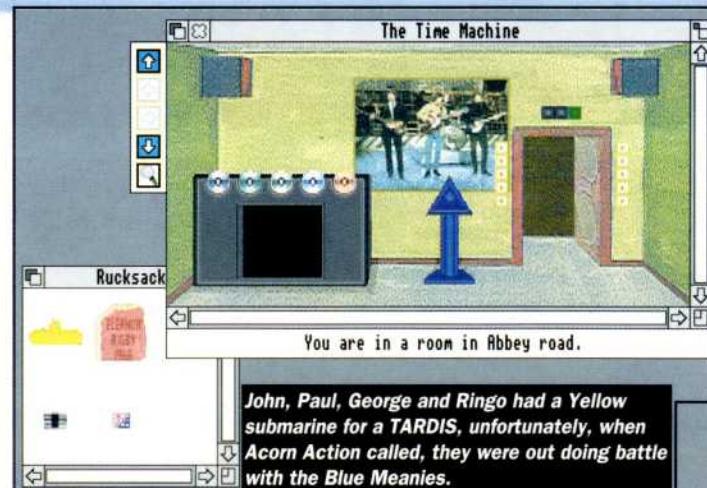
All prices exclude VAT. Based on sales data supplied by the following Acorn dealers:

ArmTech, Clwyd 0352 715840  
 Beebug, St, Albans 0727 840303  
 Ian Copestake Software, Merseyside 051 625 1006  
 Vantage One, Leeds 0532 374000



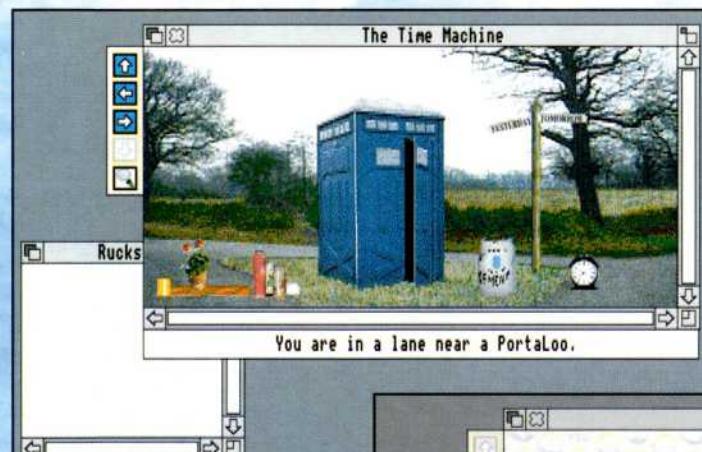
**D**ave Jenkins Takes a Ride in the most desirable vehicle in the universe, short of an Aston Martin Virage Virago. We excavated his findings from an iron age burial site where he is going to leave it to make absolutely sure that he gets it in in time, before the magazine goes to press.

Help! Help! I am trapped in a Time Vortex! If you are intelligent enough to operate this craft you may be able to



best selling games to date. It is therefore a graphical adventure that runs in the Desktop and, like Haunted

how to collect the assorted rubbish from your starting point on a country lane somewhere on 20th century Earth, you will have to use it to repair your unlikely TARDIS so that your quest can begin properly. As with any adventure game worth its salt, this involves solving a good number of logical and sometimes not so logical problems. The added dimension of time means that some of the puzzles are



**To Let: Modest sized country residence with small garden and all mod cons.**

help me. The craft is locked to the planet Earth, to overcome this, obtain a polished ruby and place it on the mounted Flux Inductor... So begins your quest to achieve the exalted status of Time Lord, a member of the legendary space and time travelling Elite. Equipped with various articles of junk and a Type 40 PortaLoo, you have to travel the space-time continuum in search of the six segments of the key to time which will admit you to the most exclusive society on Gallifrey.

The Fourth Dimension's latest, and most appropriate game is the follow up to Haunted House, one of their



House, anything that you drop outside one of its windows will drop off the bottom of the screen accompanied by a John Majoresque 'Oh dear!'. Another similarity it has is the requirement for at least 2Mb of memory in your computer and even then, you will find it quite difficult to run any other programs at the same time.

Once you have worked out

temporal paradoxes: It took me a great deal of head scratching to work out that the way to create a piece of corundum was to take some soft drinks cans back to Pre-Cambrian Earth, drop them in a fissure and leave them to boil at a high heat setting for just under 500 million years. Not all the puzzles are this difficult though, but a good

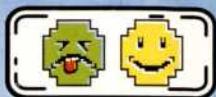
understanding of physics, chemistry and the music of the Beatles won't do you much harm. If you happen to be an Open University lecturer therefore, you will be perfectly at home with this game, though far be it from me to suggest that flares, wing collars, huge sideburns and a



propensity to bore the living daylights out of hundreds of television viewers will be any help in completing the game.

Once you have your TARDIS fully operational, you will be able to visit planets such as Mars, Dune and Automatia. Just like Dr. Who's TARDIS, your PortaLoo has a central column which rises up and down when you travel, though fortunately, it doesn't rattle about like a cheap prop on a low-budget seventies TV program. After a few undulations you will be able to step out in to your chosen destination and explore.

It is worth looking at the scenery very carefully, as some of the collectable items require you to have eyes sharper than those of a Hawk with particularly keen vision. Like the manual suggests, try everything, poke, prod and probe your way around and you will stand a far better chance of getting anywhere. Likewise, you should be prepared to do anything, however unlikely, in order to solve some of the problems. Perseverance is also



necessary as some of the actions you are required to perform require very accurate positioning of the objects that you use.

Nevertheless you shouldn't let this put you off. It is still good fun to play and you will get great satisfaction at solving the puzzles correctly and progressing through the different worlds. If you liked Haunted House, you'll probably like this even more, there are even a couple of 'in' jokes that you may notice.

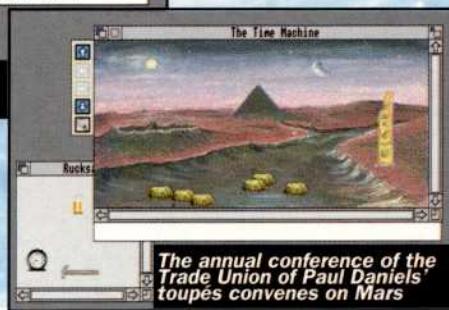


## SO YOU MISSED HAUNTED HOUSE?

Well it seems hard to believe, but some of you will never have seen Haunted House. It's not surprising though. Xenon-2 is a damn good game and it runs on a 1Mb machine

so I can understand why you might not have chosen Haunted House with the subscription offer. Haunted House was in fact the second of 4D's graphic adventure games, following the Wimp Game, which is probably best forgotten. All the games run in the Desktop, which means that, memory permitting, you can run other programs like Edit at the same time. You move around the game by pressing the arrows located by the main window, which will send you, in a not

entirely predictable way, to another location in the program. You can use the mouse to ask the computer what various objects are, to pick them up and manipulate them.



You can even drag the items in to your rucksack so that you can take them to other places. Dropping things can

cause them to smash or interact with other objects, but drop something in the wrong place and you might lose it.

## HINTS

Are you having trouble completing The Time Machine? Unfortunately, you can't use it to travel forward in time to the issue of Acorn Action in which we give the full solution, so if you are in difficulty, read on. If not, close your eyes while the studio audience and our viewers at home see some hints to help you on your way:

1. You will enjoy the game more if you solve all the clues yourself. You should only read these clues if you are more stuck than a fat elephant in a manhole.

2. To shed light on things is to illuminate or to reveal. Your lamp may not do much to light your path, but when you see the blind man, switch it on and all will become apparent.

3. The third of our ten hints is an important fraction. You'll become well acquainted during the game, if you don't believe it, look how many screenshots it appears in.

4. In the desert, you will need four of these to send a letter by Penny Post.

5. It can be very dark inside safes. Use the mouse to make absolutely sure that you have got everything out.

6. In the 1970's, ITV's program to rival Blue Peter featured a bloke called Mick, who looked uncannily like Roger



*By the looks of those freezers, Mum's gone gone to Iceland.*

Taylor, and which was called Magpie.

7. Gunpowder is a mix of saltpetre, sulphur and carbon. You'll need a good spark to light it though.

8. The sulphur is in plain view on Earth, but you will have to look for it very carefully.

9. What is the password? What?

10. The pattern of button presses to open the door at Abbey Road is the same on both panels of switches. Do the left first, then the right. It is easy enough to guess the sequence, start from the bottom and go higher.



The Time Machine will keep you amused and puzzled for a fair while, but it's not for the faint-hearted or fickle. If you're the sort of person who talks to sandcastles and is convinced

that you can outdo the billion-dollar NASA space program with just an outhouse toilet and a rusty battery, you probably won't need this game. On the other hand, if you're a budding Einstein with original pressings of The White Album and Rubber Soul, you should find this an addictive and amusing chuckle. It may lack the sophistication and depth of Simon the Sorcerer, but it's entertaining and challenging and you can play it in the Desktop when you're fed up with writing games reviews. It's a tough life you know.

**70%**

### Best feature:

Becoming a Time Lord without having to take the test.

### Worst feature:

Some actions require a lot of perseverance and repeated attempts to make anything happen.

### Product:

Time Machine

### Requirements:

Archimedes with 2Mb RAM.

### Price:

£22.09 ex. VAT

### Supplier:

The Fourth Dimension

1 Percy Street,  
Sheffield S3 8AU

### Orderline:

0742 700661



**f sport in schools is under threat then Speedball 2 is the cause. It has the competitiveness of rugby, the skill of hockey and the brutality of Mad Max. Manager and player Rob Miller stepped out onto the hard, steel pitch of this Bitmap Brothers classic to find out what it's like to be beaten senseless by a large ape wearing heavy metal armour. And here is the review he would have written if he had survived.**



*Bad luck for the blues as the opposition gives them a sound thrashing*

Speedball 2, now that's the answer. Nothing else is as perfect, as pure, as elegant or as destructive. Nothing else has quite the same capacity

for deeply felt satisfaction, of extreme machoness and superiority of character, than Speedball 2 for blasting through a metallic flock of futuristic enemies. The joy, the rapture, the pleasure... (Hang-on there a minute. I'm pretty darn certain that I've heard all this before. In fact I wrote it in the Acorn Action Games Guide myself...about Swiv. Ed.)



*Choose your ideal partner, but be careful it's no picnic*

How would you like to be in charge of a ruthless bunch of men (sorry girls, this one's strictly for the less sensitive half of the human race) whose main pleasure in life is to beat the hell out of their opponents and then spend their afternoons down at the local doing male-bonding-type things? Are you capable of training and managing such a crowd of degenerates?



## HOW TO SCORE

The Speedball arena is just like a great big pinball table. In addition to the goals, Bounce Domes give an extra two points each time the ball hits them while lighting the stars on the side of the pitch can produce up to ten extra points.

Chucking the ball at the score multiplier whacks up any points you then score, unless of course the other team activates it, whereby they gain control. If this isn't enough to remember, you've still got to keep on your toes because if a player from the other team injures you, then they get more points!

Tokens don't produce points but enable you to get the upper hand over the other team. They range from the extremely useful Freeze Team which stops your opponents for a while (dead useful this one) to the appropriately-named Manic that increases both team's attributes to maximum.

## ROLLERBALL ON ICE?

If you've ever seen the seminal film Rollerball, you'll probably know what to expect. Set in an anarchic future, star date 2100, Speedball 2 is a cross between American football, ice hockey (without the sticks but with all the violence) and some nasty kind of martial art. Throw in some tactics in the form of training and team management and a couple of teams of highly intelligent goons (you actually have to buy intelligence for them, so if you're broke your team will probably end up scoring home goals) and you have all the ingredients for a feast of bloodshed, brutality, cruelty, ferocity, fighting, force, frenzy, fury, passion, savagery, wildness and... oh dear, my thesaurus has run out! Anyway, on with the review...

The game of Speedball (if you can call running around, beating up the other team and generally causing maximum mayhem, a game) consists of

two teams, each of which must amass points against the other by scoring goals. Points are also awarded for collecting pick-up tokens littered around the arena, injuring other players (I said it was violent!) or by using one of the Bounce Domes or Stars.



*Size up the opposition as you prepare for kick off.*

## A GAME OF FOUR SIDES

There are four types of game you can take part in: Knockout, League, Cup and you'll have to read further to find out the fourth. In Knockout, you always play against the computer and it's a tough match (pun intended). When you eventually manage to win a game, you're automatically put up against an even harder and more skillful team than the last.



Controlling your team members is stunningly simple, as each member does have some semblance of intelligence and will in most cases position themselves at the receiving end of a 50 yard pass, catch the ball and, if you're lucky, punt the ball past the opposing team's defence. And if you found Sensible Soccer's lack of fine ball control just a bit irritating, you'll be pleased to know that Speedball 2 players, as well as having enormous feet, do what that kid at

Rugby school did quite a while ago, and pick up the ball instead of kicking it around on the ground like a bunch of girls. Brilliant!

Even better, if you're strolling down the middle of the playing arena and an opponent decides to liberate you of your ball, you don't have to take it lying down. In fact, if you use your turbo-power fists to full advantage, you'll probably be able to send your opponent off the field - on a stretcher.



Come in Ambulance No 5, your time is up.



**Speedball 2** has it all: speed, action and, well, lots of violence. Faster than a speeding bullet, harder than a Millwall supporter and nastier than someone who is a particularly nasty person indeed!

**Best Feature:** Two player option is excellent, especially against your best friends.

**Worst Feature:** Two player option is guaranteed to make you fall out with your best friends.

**35%**

If you choose to enter the Speedball League, you'll have a long, hard slog ahead as you seek to gain promotion to the Speedball First Division. Starting in Division 2, you have 14 weeks to fight against the other teams and move up the ranks.



Picking your manager isn't half as hard as sacking him later on.

### THE MANAGEMENT

Fighting it out on the Speedball arena is only half the battle and perfecting the skills of manager and trainer are just as important. Each squad consists of 12 players made up from 9 team members and three substitutes, and all players can be 'trained' individually or as a whole. In the hard, stark reality of modern life, everything comes down to money and it's basically the amount of dosh you have in the bank that determines how well you can train your team. You start with only 1100 credits and must choose carefully which players you want to improve. Increasing player's attributes helps to improve your team's chances of making it through to the next round. The best player is a tough player (basically, you score points for injuring the opposing players) and concentrating on stamina, aggression, attack and power attributes is a good starting point for a victorious match.

It's all rather like football actually; teams at the top of Division 2 get moved up, while teams at the bottom of Division 1 get moved down. Simple eh? And there are no Play-Offs either.

Very usefully, there's a save option that allows you to save league details at certain times during the season (such as early on when you're doing particularly well). Believe me, this facility is extremely necessary to avoid repetitive fire-button strain.

per round.

Needless to say, it still involves lots of action, goalscoring and, of course, violence.

The final option is without doubt the best. The fourth. Speedball 2 is in two-player mode! This is absolutely wicked. There's nothing else quite like it. For venting the stresses and strains of modern life it can't be beaten (apart from a trip down to the local followed by a slap-up meal at your favourite tandoori).

Joysticks are essential here, unless you can afford to replace your keyboard every week or so and is the best excuse I've found so far for forking out for a double joystick interface.

In the first game of Speedball 2 I tried, I was absolutely slaughtered by the computer. Like most sports simulations, the controls take a bit of getting used to and as you might guess,



Watch out for the dangerous cross court ball-in-the-net job!

using the keyboard isn't exactly the ideal way to get your players up and down the pitch, let alone score goals. Joysticks really are vital to

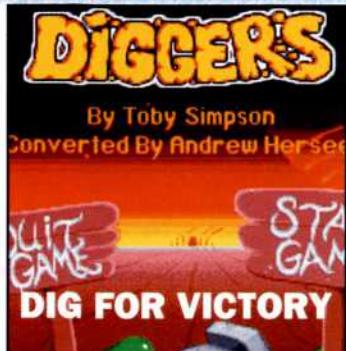
get the best out of the game and really do help prolong your keyboard's life!

I've waited two years for Speedball 2 to make it onto the Archimedes and it's certainly been worth it. A winner!

The Cup option is a different ball game (but still Speedball) entirely. It's similar to Knockout but this time there are four fixed rounds, with one match over two legs

**Product:** Speedball 2  
**Requirements:** Archimedes 1Mb (VGA Monitor compatible)  
**Price:** £29.99  
**Supplier:** Krisalis Software Ltd, 0709 372290  
 Teque House, Masons Yard,  
 Downs Row, Moorgate,  
 Rotherham S60 2HD

# REVIEWS



**Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. May I have your attention please. We are now approaching the planet Zarg and will be landing in approximately two days. The crew and I have enjoyed flying with you for the past year and would like to take this brief opportunity to introduce you to the legendary planet of Zarg.**



Planet Zarg's 33 mining zones. Flags indicate the completed zones.

If you look inside the cubicle beside your seat, you will find a copy of the latest Zargon Guide Book. This is essential reading if you wish to appreciate your visit and enjoy the 'mining experience' to the fullest. We regret that

we are unable to supply you with a copy of the normal electronic book. These are currently unavailable due to a shortage of Texturised Neural Transistors (and an

intelligent gender-insensitive shredding machine about which very little is known).

As you will read in the book, Zarg has been described by many as a miners' paradise and a planet of riches beyond man's wildest dreams. It is known throughout the universe for its extraordinary mineral wealth and its history is as colourful as the jewels that have been mined from below its surface.

However, Zarg is also a planet of great tragedy. For eight of its seventeen month year it is convulsed by savage volcanic and tectonic activity that destroys most structures above ground. Indeed, Zarg could never be described as a planet of great natural beauty, unless travelling thousands of

feet underground to see the ruins of a lost city appeals to you. Entire civilisations have vanished into the depths of the planet.

For thousands of years the planet's abundant resources have been exploited by an

enormous number of unscrupulous get rich quick merchants, very few of whom have found the wealth they sought. Only recently has a high-profile conservation group,

Friends of the Universe, run a successful 'Save Zarg' campaign.



exchanged for cash at the Zargon Bank. Lastly, to encourage healthy competition, two tribes of diggers are allowed to mine an area at the same time.

It is directly because of these changes that you, the respectable tourist, can now



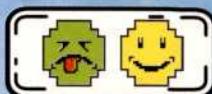
Zarg is not renowned for its natural beauty.

As a result of this campaign, the planet's authorities have announced sweeping changes to the rules regarding mining on Zarg. The most radical of these, known as the Glorious 412th, allows for only one month's digging per year, starting, unsurprisingly, on the glorious 412th. All mining operations outside this period are now forbidden. Less radical, but equally important, are the following rules: Instead of anyone being allowed to pick up a shovel and dig, only four tribes, who have always lived on the planet, are now permitted to dig. You must employ one of these tribes to mine for you. Secondly, each dig must be registered at the Zargon Mineral Trading Centre, and all minerals must be

experience the pleasures of mining on Zarg, and if you're very lucky, make a fortune in the process - that's the whole purpose of coming here. No longer is it necessary to risk your life at the rockface 10,000 feet underground, or even, horror of horrors, get dirt underneath your fingernails. You simply register at the trading centre, employ a tribe of diggers to do the dirty work, supply them with equipment as and when they need it, and then sit



State of the art Digger control technology. Dig from the comfort of your armchair.



## Un jeu de ruse, de course au trésor et d'aventure souterraine.

operation from the remote control terminal located in your Zargon Hilton hotel room.

You're probably wondering which tribe you should hire. This does require some thought, as once you've chosen a team, you are stuck with them for the full mining period. The Habbish, although the weakest of the four tribes, have several plus points: they're intelligent and have an excellent motivation to work very hard for you - they need the money to pay off the galactic repo-men, the baseball bat wielding Thungurs. The Groblins are the fastest of the diggers, and have enormous stamina. Their only shortcoming is an unfortunate weakness for Grok, a fiendishly strong drink with a smell "worse than the breath of a fire-breathing Scabrosaur from the swirling slime pools of Sulphuria". Reliable and patient, the Quarriors are the strongest of the races. They are expert saboteurs and have a certain flair with dynamite, but are

there are the F'Targs, who do not like carrots. They are fast diggers with loads of stamina, but are easily distracted by side-attractions. A watchful eye should be kept over them at all times.



*A group of Diggers eagerly awaits your first command as they gaze over the Zargon landscape.*



*Amazing screen grabbing software enabled us to create this interesting cross-section of the Diggers at work.*



camera allows you to see exactly what the diggers are up to, and the computer system

range of mining equipment, which can all be bought from the Zargon Mineral Trading Centre.

Also watch out for 'the enemy', a rival tribe of diggers mining the same area as you. There's little love lost between the various tribes.



allows you to send messages to the diggers, such as 'Dig', 'Walk', 'Pick up', 'Go to home base', and 'Go to market'. Of course, advances in computer technology have resulted in these text descriptions being replaced with pictorial representations, also known as icons.

## Un Gioco di astuzia, ricchezza e avventure in mondi sotterranei.

Once you've successfully completed a zone, either by mining enough jewels and selling them at the Zargon Bank or by eradicating your opponents tribe, it's time to move on to the next level. Don't, whatever you do, forget to save the mining status.

## Ein Spiel voller List, Reichtum und unterirdischer Abenteuer.



*Inside the Mineral Trading Centre. First door on the left - the Stock Exchange. On the right - the mining shop. And straight ahead - the Minister of Mining.*

your hotel to get the balls a rolling and the spades a shovelling. Each digger carries a powerful video camera and computer system, both of which are linked into your hotel control terminal. The

While you've got your team members working nice and hard, you'll have to spend some time looking after them. Put them through too much, and it's possible that they'll go on a temporary strike. To keep them happy, it's best to supply them with regular health packs and a whole

Time is money, and you'll kick yourself if you have to repeat a zone simply because you forgot to register that you had completed it.

What Diggers desperately needs (author of Diggers 2 take note) is a speed-up option as in Lemmings 2. Each level in Diggers is the size of

lacking a bit of grey matter between the ears. And finally



*Might I interest you in this very useful flood gate?*

three A0 pages stuck together. That's a hell of a lot of territory for five diggers, each the size of my thumbnail, to dig their way through. It is not unusual for a single level to take half an hour to complete. Multiply that by 33 levels!

Also required are some extra challenges in the game. Dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, there's got to be more to life than just digging. Diggers really needs some fast, frenetic and good old fashioned action.

Many reviewers have compared Diggers to Lemmings. There are some similarities: both games involve you

playing God, dishing out 'do this' and 'do that' orders and yielding the power of life and death with your mouse. Both use a similar control system for giving instructions and both games ooze atmosphere and originality. Diggers does fall short of Lemmings in certain areas however. It's lacking the one vital element that gives Lemmings the edge



over the rest - humour. Nuking Lemmings (please accept my apologies if you're a Lemming) is one of the most enjoyable pastimes available without prescription.

Nothing beats watching the little blighters throw their hands in the air and shout 'Oh no' before being splattered around the inside of the monitor. Secondly, while Lemmings levels could be completed in almost all cases in under 8 minutes, a single Diggers level can take half an hour or more. Since you can only save your progress when a level is completed, this can be very irritating, especially when you've been playing for 25

minutes and your last digger manages to flood itself out of existence. I can tell you that there ain't much desire to start the level again, at least not until you feel the urge again.

The conversion of Diggers to the Archimedes heralds the arrival of Millennium in the Acorn games market. Based in Cambridge, Millennium is

most well known for creating the illustrious fishy agent James Pond. The company has a long list of titles in its catalogue, including top selling games such as Dune 2 and Daughter of Serpents, both of which will be coming to the Archimedes and Risc PC later this year.

Thank you for flying Virgin Galactic. Enjoy your visit and please travel with us again.



**Best feature:** Originality and addictiveness.

**Worst feature:** The tedium factor that sets in about half way through the game. Don't worry about this too much though. It takes so long to get this far into the game that it doesn't really matter!

**Product**

Diggers

**Price**

£29.99 ex. VAT

**Supplier**

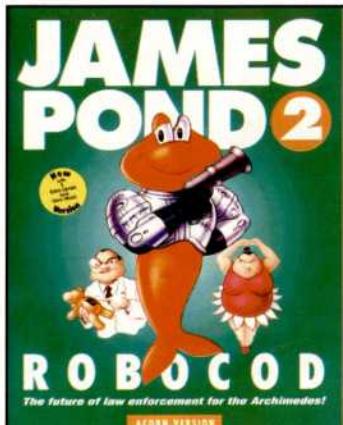
Millennium, Quern House  
Mill Court, Great Shelford  
Cambridge CB2 5LD  
0480 498889



**VERDICT**

If your ideal computer game is Xenon II and your favourite film is Terminator (either one will do), you will in all likelihood find Diggers just a tad boring. Ok, so it's got explosives with which you can send unfriendly miners to Never-Never Land, but these just don't pack the same punch as a Nashwan Power Podule attached to a Xenon star fighter. If, on the other hand, you've completed Lemmings 1 and 2, and you now find yourself sitting in front of your computer staring aimlessly into the screen, Diggers is just the game for you. Fun, addictive and entertaining.

# REVIEWS



**IMPORTANT NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT:** Pierce Brosnan to play leading role in next James Pond movie. (Or was that supposed to be Bond movie?)

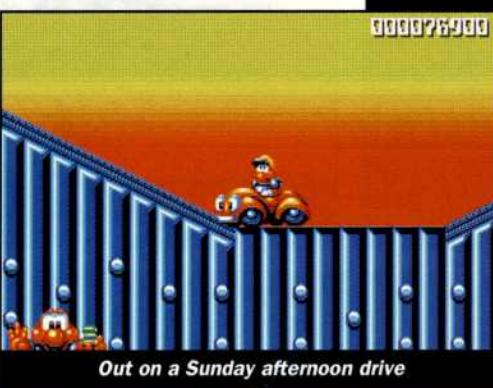
James Pond 2 saw our watery friend (all trussed up in a metal jacket) as the cunning secret agent Robocod, in a huge underwater adventure comprising 80 levels. James Pond 2+ is basically the same but it promises five extra levels, new music and 'even better gameplay'. It may strike you as odd that Gamesware should go to the trouble of launching a new product that is hardly any different from the previous one - Pond 2+ gives you 85 levels instead of Pond 2's 80 - especially if you find the very thought of being able to complete 80 levels an amusing, dreamy concept.

Completed James Pond 2 yet? If you have, you may be interested in some extra screens. Sam Greenhill went in search of the elusive secret agent James Pond and sent in this report from the North Pole.

But the reason is quite simple. Gamesware converted Robocod at a time when Millennium, the game's original publisher, was just finishing off the enhanced version for the Amiga 1200 that had, you guessed it, five extra screens. Being a little too late for the Gamesware



It's Wimbledon time again



Out on a Sunday afternoon drive

conversion, the elusive five screens were left out of the first batch of Acorn editions. They are now safely installed

concentrates on the value of the upgrade:

the game itself is great. So what exactly do you get for your eight quid? Well, not a great deal is the



Hang in there James

in all new copies of the game and owners of the initial batch can upgrade their game for £7.99. This review

answer. The new music is there all right, but then computer music is hardly the sort of thing you buy concert

tickets to hear, or sneak into Our Price to buy the 'album-from-the-game' to listen to when nobody else is around. (Unless the game is called

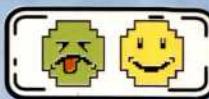
Flashback, in which case you definitely do want the CD.) Even if it were on sale, it would take a lot of courage to nip

into the shop and whisper your request to the sales assistant, because they would typically yell from the back of the shop 'Is that James Pond theme music on CD, cassette or vinyl?' And everybody in the shop would stop what they were doing and look at you, all thinking how sad you must be.

What else? Right, let's find out what the promised 'even better gameplay' is all about. Nothing obvious, so why don't we put Pond through a few tricky manoeuvres to see if he handles himself any better. Let's see, how about a running jump. Nope, no noticeable difference here. A death-defying drop from a great height - maybe Pond has a special gadget to slow him down? Nope. All right, how



James and his little friends get ready for action



# REVIEWS

about the car or the plane. Perhaps they have been souped up with black smoke emissions or oil spills to fool the enemy? Er, nope. OK, no problem, there are still more things to try. How about, er... a new... er... better... er... oh all right, I give up, what is the 'even better gameplay'.

Cue phone conversation with man at Gamesware: "Ah, the 'even better

good? Judge for yourself, because they are no different in style to the other 80 you've already got. They are not particularly harder or easier than any of the others and are spread around the 80, not tagged on the end. In fact the first level is one of the new ones, and not a very interesting one at that.

Apart from the advertised extras, there are a number of



*Beware of low flying aircraft*

gameplay', yes. Right, well, what that means is... er, hold on I'll just see if anybody in the office knows. [Long pause]. Right, well, basically it means that there are some new levels with new puzzles and new exciting challenges." Hmm, so if the 'even better gameplay' is the five extra levels then it is not strictly true to say 'five extra levels and even better gameplay' then is it? "Er... no."

So where are we? Essentially, we're talking five extra levels for £7.99.

Are they any

exciting differences in Pond 2+ from the first edition of the game. For example, according to the author who



*Hello, is there anybody out there?*

did the conversion: "All the bugs have now been fixed." Also, fans might remember

the guest appearance of Bertie Bassett, the Liquorice Allsorts man who wanders amiably around on one of the sweets levels. Well, there were some copyright problems. Someone forgot to ask Bertie



*Hang in there man*

if he minded appearing in the Acorn version as

well as the Amiga one, and he took it as a personal insult. As a result, Bertie on

completed all 80 from the original Pond 2 and are really desperate for more, this is one upgrade to avoid. If you haven't bought James Pond 2 yet, get on your bicycle and buy it. The full price is still the same, so you get more for your money.



Eight quid might sound cheap but I can think of better ways to spend it than buying this upgrade. Save up and buy a new game altogether. The upgrade is only a tiny fraction of a whole game and was never really intended to retail separately.

**Best feature:** The five new screens are as good as the other 80 in the original game

**Worst feature:** Essentially, there's nothing new for your money

**57%**



*I'm dreaming of a white Christmas*



*Penguin alert! Penguin alert!*

the Acorn has stormed off in a huff and Gamesware has wheeled out the Gingerbread Man to fill his place. Finally, the game now has a 'Continue' feature so you can start a new game where the old one

left off.

All in all, £8 for five extra levels and a few frills doesn't amount to a good deal in my book. Unless, you've

<b>Product:</b>	James Pond 2+
<b>Requirements:</b>	Archimedes with 1Mb RAM.
<b>Price:</b>	£7.99 ex. VAT upgrade £25.99 ex. VAT full version
<b>Supplier:</b>	Gamesware Unit 26, The Bartletts Hamble, Hants SO3 5RD
<b>Orderline:</b>	0635 299676

# Infotainment

YOUR 16 PAGE INFORMATION EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

Volume 1 Issue 1

July/August 1994

## Find out more about your Acorn computer

*In this issue...*

### Help For Beginners

*What your computer  
is capable of doing*

### Educational Games & Software

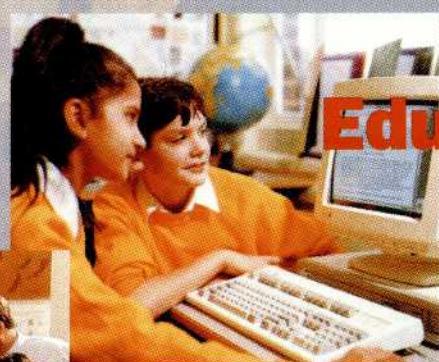
*Software with educational merit*

### Projects

*Ideas for things to do  
with your computer*

### Easy Upgrades

*Simple upgrades you  
can perform at home*



# Welcome...

to the very first Infotainment section of Acorn Action.

As there are a lot of magazines who forget about the parents, we thought we'd aim the Infotainment section largely at you, although if you are not a parent you will still find much of interest. If you are a parent the chances are that it is your children who use the computer almost exclusively; as a result you probably feel "out of control" with the computer system you have bought.

For example, have you ever felt that the children know more than you do?

Would you love to be shown how to use the system for your own purposes, how to converse with your children about the computer without being at a disadvantage, and how to lead them onto more meaningful use of the computer?

If so the Infotainment section is here to help you. It is designed as a separate pull-out, which means that you can extract it and read it at your leisure. When the kids are in bed you can creep up to the computer, switch it on and try out some of the ideas given in our project pages entitled "The Blackboard".

The Infotainment pull-out comprises the following sections which we hope will answer the majority of your questions:

**"Beginners' Paradise"** will explain what your computer is capable of doing, and how it compares with other computer systems.

**"Not the Games Reviews"** is devoted to software that has some educational merit. Don't worry, we will not be ignoring educational games as they have a valuable role to play.

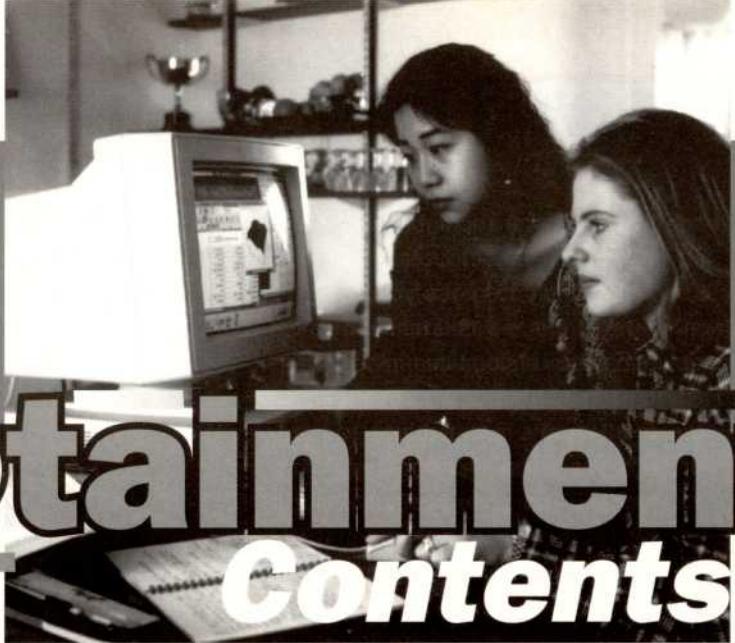
**"The Blackboard"** will propose ideas for self-contained tasks, which once you have mastered can be suggested as tasks for your children to do. Initially we will be using the applications that are built into the computer, however in future issues we will get more adventurous and provide free applications on the Acorn ActionDisc.

**"DIY the Easy Way"** will look at simple upgrades that you can perform at home, with no special tools, because at some stage you may wish to upgrade your computer system to allow it to perform more tasks, or get it to work faster.

***Well, that's the mix of articles we think will interest you, what do you think? Please write in with your comments and views. This is, after all, the only way we can tell if we are getting it right.***



Sheridan Williams  
Managing Editor



# Infotainment Contents



## BEGINNERS PARADISE

This section will explain what your computer is capable of doing, and how it compares with other computer systems.

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### *Little Acorns*



## NOT THE GAMES REVIEWS

The main part of the magazine is all about games.

This section is devoted to software, but software that has some educational merit.

There are many educational games available for the Acorn and these will not be ignored.

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### *Making Learning Fun*



## DIY THE EASY WAY

A column devoted to simple upgrades that you can perform at home, with no special tools.

X

### *RAM Upgrades*



## THE BLACKBOARD

This section will propose ideas for a self-contained task, easy to perform by parents and kids. Inevitably in the initial issues we will have to use packages that are directly built into the computer.

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### *A Project Using Paint*

# Infotainment FROM LITTLE ACORNS

Martin West hopes to convince you that you really have made the correct choice in buying your Acorn computer.

**S**o you've got your kids an Acorn computer, a whole load of games, and hopefully some manuals to get you started. As a concerned parent, you are interested in finding out what the computer can do to help educate them and prepare them for the future, which,

**like it or not, is going to involve computers in some small way at least.**



**A5000 with PC Card**

Naturally, your children have other ideas. They bribed you into subscribing to Acorn Action by offering to do lots of housework, but the vacuum cleaner is still in the cupboard under the stairs

and they've been playing the Flashback demo solidly for a week now.

You bought it because they told you that it was "the one that they use at school". Surely they do more than play games at school? You are wondering if it might have been a better idea to get a PC with Windows 3 like the one at the office, or one of Apple's PowerPC machines currently being advertised on TV?

After all, if these are the computers used in business, surely these are the best ones to use to prepare your kids for the future?

Personally, I think you've made the right choice in buying an Acorn computer, but to explain why, let me start by debunking two popular myths about Acorn systems:

*First, Acorns are just school computers; they have no relevance to the outside world.*

Think again. There are a lot of companies out there that use Acorn machines in business. There is a large range of business software for Acorn machines which many companies find perfectly able to meet their needs. From the British Museum and large companies like Lucas and Asda, to small typesetting bureaux and the producers of scientific journals, all manner of institutions have found that Acorn computers are very capable machines in business.

*Second, IBM PC compatibles are the industry standard. There is no point in learning about any other computer system.*

This one makes me cringe. First of all, let me say two words: Open systems. This is where the future of computing lies. It is all about being able to share data and run programs on many different computers without having to worry about exactly what sort of silicon chips they contain. MicroSoft, the creator of

Windows know this, which is why it has written Windows NT, a version of Windows designed to run on as many different computer systems as possible. Apple knows it too, and the PowerPC not only runs all its older software, but also runs a program that will make it behave like an IBM PC. Acorn's newest machine, the Risc PC, has been designed to accept an Intel processor card which will allow it to run Windows software. In the future, there is no reason why a similar PowerPC card could not be fitted to allow Apple software to run too.

The only thing really stopping complete integration is the manufacturers' wishes to promote their own software and hardware. Even so, the ideas behind software

are merging. Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) are now considered to be essential. This is the system that Acorn computers use, where programs appear in 'windows' on the screen and a mouse and menus are used to control the program's operation. Once you have learned to use one of these programs, and it's not too difficult, then you can adapt to using other programs and other computers with GUIs

very easily. There are slight differences between Windows, Apple's System 7 and RISC OS, the Acorn GUI, but they are largely the same. Learn to use one and you can use them all. It's like riding a bike.

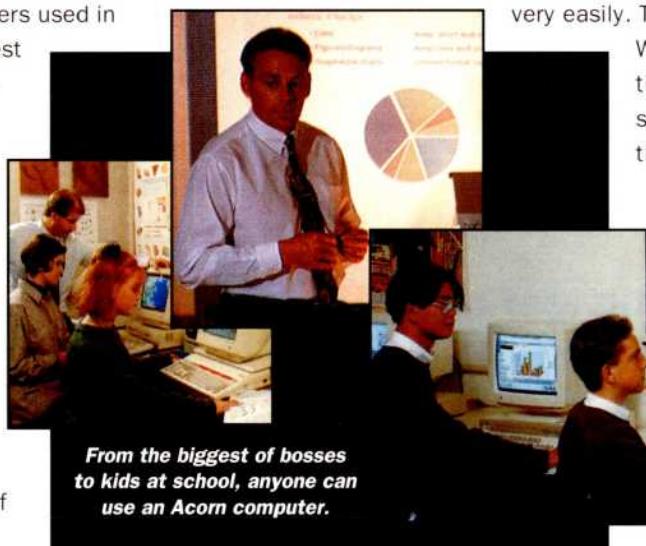
So if all computers are the same, what is so special about Acorn computers? Well, your kids have discovered one reason. As a games machine, there's little to beat the Acorn. The games market is growing all the time and all the best games are released for it, ranging from strategy to arcade shoot-'em-ups. Just take a look at this magazine.

The Acorn is ideal as a family machine, not just because it can keep the children entertained for hours on end, but because it is able to cope with real work as well as any office machine. It can also educate your children from an early age, through their entire school years and beyond.

Some computers are able to impress people with their ease of use. This is a reputation Apple has long exploited and which MicroSoft has recently been trying to stress in its TV adverts in which little old ladies work out on parallel bars to show you how easy it is. What they don't tell you is that Windows is not a patch on Acorn's RISC OS, and it can take a lot of complex setting up to get your computer to run Windows well. An experienced Windows user needs well over an hour to set up a machine from scratch.



**The Acorn's GUI makes it easy to learn**



**From the biggest of bosses to kids at school, anyone can use an Acorn computer.**

All Acorn machines come ready to run. The software (RISC OS) that makes each one run is built into the computer, so it doesn't have to be loaded every time you switch on. This means that your computer will be ready to use very soon after you switch it on. You do not have to wait ages for it to load all the software from disc. A further consequence of this is that it does not necessarily need an expensive hard disc (a bit like a floppy disc but which stores much more information and is permanently fitted to the machine). With a PC running Windows a hard disc is essential. Whereas on all Acorn's

computers (whatever the price) the operating system, fonts and applications programs are already in the machine. This means that they are loaded almost instantly, making it practical to use floppy disc only machines.

Because almost all of the memory is available for programs to use, a machine with only 1Mb of memory can still run a wide range of programs, though many packages require more memory for serious work. This is a feature that is almost unique to Acorn machines. It is a result of the fact that Acorn has used technology consistently. It started off with a technology which was ahead of its time and offered huge potential for future development. This is in stark contrast to the PC world where manufacturers have attempted to meet the demands expected of them by a series of bodge. And now Apple's former Macintosh technology has

been replaced by PowerPC, a processor based on the RISC methodology of microprocessor design, the one which Acorn has been using since it introduced the Archimedes 7 years ago! That's a long time in computing.

#### The Risc PC

demonstrates just how expandable Acorn systems can be. It can run software that was written for the first Archimedes machines. These programs can benefit from the extra memory of the Risc PC and many can benefit from the improved graphics facilities. The original systems could generate graphics screens with 640\*512 pixels in up to 256 colours, yet the Risc PC is compatible with them and can use up to 16 million colours at a time. It can also support a resolution of 1600\*1280 pixels. Even if you only have an old A3000 machine, you will be able to use nearly all your programs on a Risc PC with very few problems.



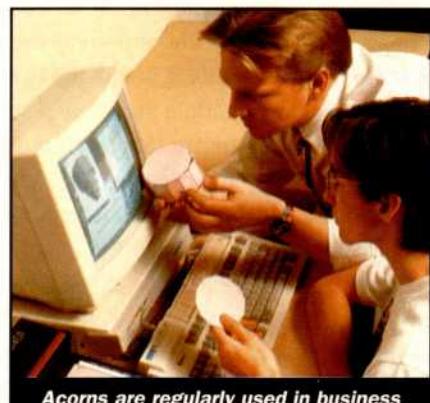
**So simple a child could follow it**

One of the most striking areas where this can be seen is with Full Motion Video (FMV). This is where 'movies' can be watched on screen with the accompanying soundtrack playing through the computer's speaker in stereo. The movies can be stored on anything from a floppy disc to CD, although the huge amount of data used in movies means that only very short sequences can be stored on a floppy disc. Acorn's FMV system, called **Replay**, can be used on any Archimedes or Risc PC. This makes it very different to most other FMV systems, which require extra hardware to be bought or which only work on the most expensive high specification machines. FMV is becoming particularly important in computing. Nowhere is this more evident than in education, where film clips are used to illustrate CD encyclopedias.

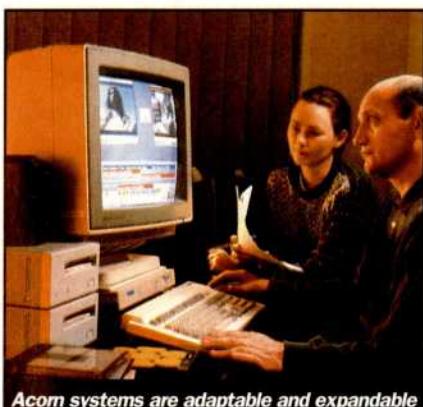
There is no need to go to the lengths of equipping your system with a costly CD-ROM to get the most out of it though. Four of the programs that are supplied with all Acorn machines are not only of educational value, but are so useful that at least some of them are used by Acorn owners on a regular basis no matter what other software they buy. On new machines three of these, Paint, Edit and Draw, can be accessed by clicking Select on the Apps icon. The fourth, called Maestro can be found on Apps disc 1 or in the Apps directory of your hard disc. If this makes no sense to you, then you should read the Welcome Guide that is supplied with all machines. This will tell you all you need to know to do the important things like loading applications and saving files to disc. It should make you realise just how easy it is to use your computer.

**Edit** is a text editor: A very basic word processor. It has features like find and replace, but not the more sophisticated word processor features like spelling checkers and different font styles. Nevertheless, the files it produces can be used in all Acorn word processors as well as on some other computer systems.

*Continues over...*



**Acorns are regularly used in business**



**Acorn systems are adaptable and expandable**



**Acorn Action Pack, Learning Curve and Home Office**



...Continued from v

**Paint**, as its name suggests, is a painting program. Although its facilities are far from exhaustive, the files it produces can be used in any other Acorn painting program and can also be converted for use on other computers.

**Draw** is widely acknowledged as the best of these programs. It is a drawing program which, unlike paint, builds up a picture as a set of objects which can be individually manipulated by scaling and rotating them. There is one big advantage to this technique apart from the way that you can manipulate images. Because each object is stored as a set of curves and lines, it can be enlarged to any size without any loss in quality. If you have a good quality printer, you can therefore print out an image that has better resolution than you can see on screen. Many Acorn programs such as word processors, spreadsheets and databases can use files produced by Draw. In fact, most graphing programs produce Draw files of their output, so Draw can be used to make small alterations to the resulting graphs, such as changing the colours or the typeface used for the labelling.

**Maestro**, unsurprisingly, is a program for making music by creating standard musical notation on screen with the mouse. It has some fairly sophisticated features, but is no match for some of the professional music packages available for the Acorn. It is capable of using multiple staves and stereo positioning. It can even print out the music that is created with it.

Some Acorn computers are sold with extra software, such as the Learning Curve and Home Office packages. These offer sophisticated packages like Acorn's Advance; an integrated suite with a word processor, spreadsheet, database and graph program. The Home Office includes the Datapower database and Easiwriter; a very powerful word processor from Icon Technology, the company which also wrote MacAuthor for Apple machines. These are all capable packages which can cope with the sort of tasks that most offices require.

All Acorn computers with the latest version of the operating system (the software which makes the machine run) can read and write to DOS discs, the kind of floppy discs used by PC compatibles. Apple computers are supplied with a program called Apple File Exchange which will also read and write to DOS discs. This means that files can be exchanged between the three systems. This is particularly useful if you use word processors that support Rich Text Format, a standard format for transferring text between different packages. It allows you to transfer text between applications such as Colton's Fireworkz on the Acorn and Microsoft Word for Windows.

If you find that you use programs on an IBM PC compatible that just won't produce files that can be used on the Acorn, you may be able to use Acorn's PC-Soft. This package, which is supplied as standard with Learning Curve systems, allows the Acorn to run PC software alongside programs that were written specifically for Acorn machines.

If you still find that the programs that you want to run will not work, it is possible to buy PC cards from companies like Aleph One. This is cheaper than buying an actual PC, because the keyboard, disc drives and monitor of your Acorn are used by the PC card: You don't have to buy these things all over

again. In fact, the PC card for the new Risc PC even shares the Risc PC's memory, making it even cheaper. It can also use the Risc PC's own microprocessor for graphics, so it runs faster than an equivalent PC.

All these PC interfaces can run in a window on the Desktop, so you can also use other programs at the same time. This is one of the main strengths of the Acorn operating system. You can even transfer files between different programs. It means that changing the appearance of a picture that you have placed in a word processor document is simply a matter of dragging the picture from the save box to the relevant graphics program, then back again when you have made the changes that you wanted. Some Acorn packages, notably Computer Concepts' Impression are beginning to use a system called Object Linking and Embedding (OLE). This means that the entire process is automated so that double-clicking on the graphic, while holding down the Ctrl key, will transfer the graphic to the appropriate program, even loading that program from disc if necessary.

Another powerful feature of Acorn systems is the fully integrated Filer that they all use. This is unlike any other system, yet it is so obvious and easy to use, that you will be left wondering why nobody else uses this approach. Quite simply it means that you can open windows on the Desktop that contain icons representing all the files that are available on your disc. An icon is a pictorial and textual representation of a real object - they are used extensively in GUIs. You can group files together in directories, represented by a blue folder icon. Each different program and file has a different icon to show you what it is. Edit, for example, produces files with icons that represent sheets of paper with writing on them. The program has an icon with a pen and ink bottle to show that it is a tool for producing text. Programs and files can be edited by just double-clicking on them. The really unique feature of the Acorn Filer is that you can save files in a directory of your choice, just by dragging the file icon to that directory, either from the program that created the file, or from another directory.

It is features like this that make Acorn systems ideal for beginners, young or old. Acorn encourage software developers to follow a strict set of guidelines, which means that all programs, no matter what they do, can be used in much the same way. They can be understood and learnt in a matter of minutes.

So, hold your head up high, you really have chosen the best machine. Most people used to Windows are impressed when they see how easy Acorn computers are to use. They make the ideal machine for use in the home. There are plenty more reasons why Acorn computers are so good. Many of these will become apparent as you learn how to get the most out of your machine. In future articles we will show you which software will help you make the best use of your machine for writing, graphics, music and education. In other parts of the Infotainment section, you can find reviews of educational software and ideas for projects for using your computer. **Info**



### PRIME SOLVER

Occasionally, like a good book, a program comes along that once started just can't be put down. Minerva Software's Prime Solver is one of those. Chris Drage had to prise his own youngsters away from Prime Solver in order to write this review!

**W**hat exactly is Prime Solver? Well, it is a creative and practical problem-solving system which is truly applicable for every age group. and there are few programs that can make that claim! This little gem of a program provides a means of creating and solving mechanical puzzles using the real life mechanics of ropes, pulleys and various structural elements. It is designed to promote discussion, goal-oriented thought and with experience, problem solving strategies, encouraging both creative and logical thinking in the process.

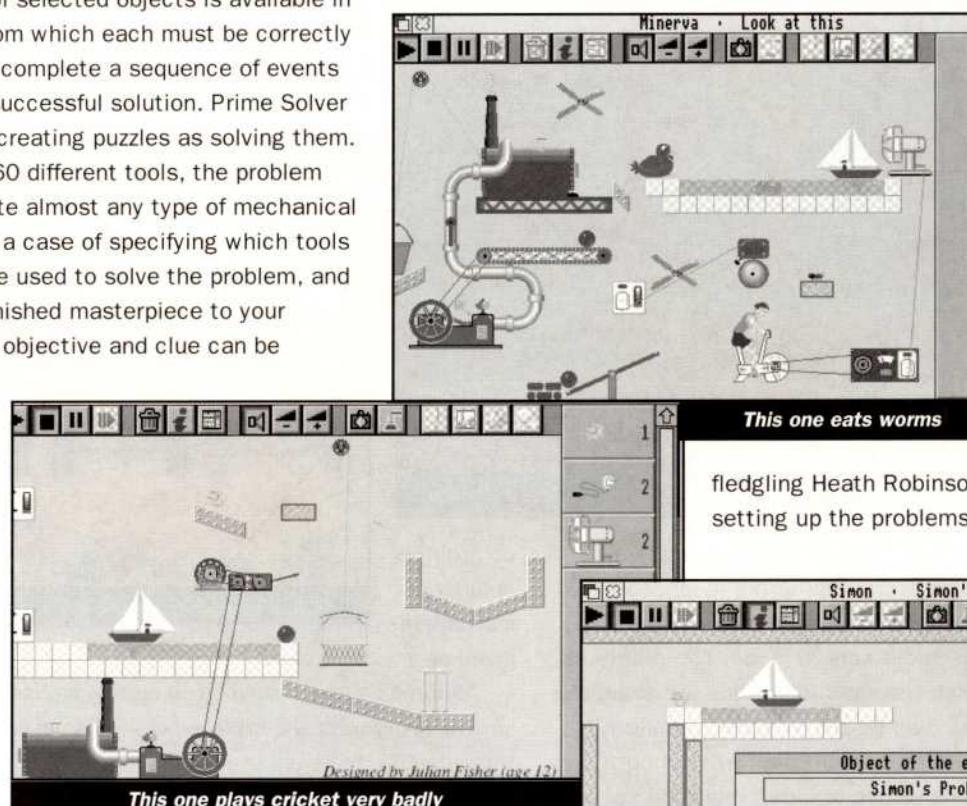
To get the uninitiated started, there are 16 puzzles of varying complexity to be solved. Each puzzle appears as a window comprising both static objects and others which must be set in motion. A library of selected objects is available in a "gadget box" from which each must be correctly placed in order to complete a sequence of events which leads to a successful solution. Prime Solver is as much about creating puzzles as solving them. From a choice of 60 different tools, the problem designer can create almost any type of mechanical problem. It's then a case of specifying which tools and objects can be used to solve the problem, and presenting your finished masterpiece to your victims! A written objective and clue can be entered which will appear with the problem.

In the guise of problem solver, you must use the range of tools provided by the designer to achieve the objective. There is an experimental mode in which you can try out different configurations to see what the results will be, and more than likely you'll find even better solutions than the designer intended! Once a "machine" has been constructed you can watch its operation complete with sound effects. When a satisfactory solution has been found, the program informs you how long it took before moving on to the next problem.

Prime Solver has a number of excellent features, not least of which is the ability to configure the software to make it more

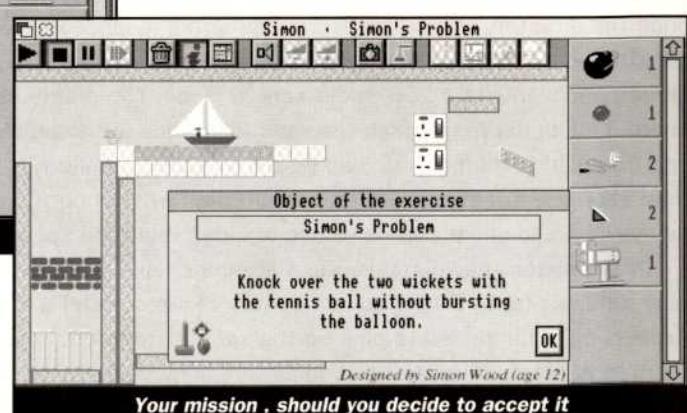


appropriate to a particular level of ability. Similarly, the on-line, interactive help facility means that getting to grips with the program is very straightforward in the early stages. Being able to add a picture (sprite) to create an interesting background also provides an added dimension to a problem. The force of gravity and air pressure levels can be adjusted to provide interesting effects and there is even an option for setting up a rolling demonstration.



Whether you intend to use Prime Solver to test real models prior to embarking on their construction, or for investigating causes and effects, or for just having fun, you can't really go wrong. I'm even willing to bet you'll be just as enthralled and captivated as your

fledgling Heath Robinson(s). Just who will be setting up the problems for whom?



Prime Solver (£69 + VAT) is available from Minerva Software, Baring Crescent, Exeter, EX1 1TL.

# Infotainment

It is a fact that children really enjoy practising skills presented in the form of a computer program, particularly if the title of the program contains the word 'game'. H.S. Software has established a reputation for programs which are fun and easy to use and children usually love them. Chris Drage finds that Fun and Games and its successor, TV Fun and Games are no exception.

## FUN AND GAMES

Consisting of three programs, Fun and Games offers activities which cover a wide range of abilities and skills. The aim in **Coconuts** is to help a character pick the right fruits from a variety of tropical trees in order to complete a pattern shown on the screen. The program offers skills such as sequencing and helping the child to devise and repeat patterns on screen. BURGER BOY involves making up orders in a burger bar from a choice of burgers, chips and drinks. This game covers a wider range of abilities and skills: reading, matching, sequencing, auditory and visual memory and addition of money units. It has four levels within which both a four-year-old or an eight-year-old will be challenged. Once an order is completed, the greedy customer scoffs the lot with over indulgent, sound effects! **Tidy**, the third program in this suite,

is a quiet game in which the user is invited to help Emma tidy up her bedroom by guiding her parrot to put all her toys away. Again, it is a game for practising a range of skills including early reading, comparing objects of different shape and size, and particularly for practising the use of prepositions.

All three programs are loaded and run in the same way: once the directory window appears, a program is loaded by clicking on its icon. Each program takes over the whole screen and works in a 256-colour screen mode. The programs share a menu bar from which the various options are available and from which the program can be run or ended. Similarly, they each use good quality digitised pictures with smooth animations and make extensive use of clear, digitised speech.

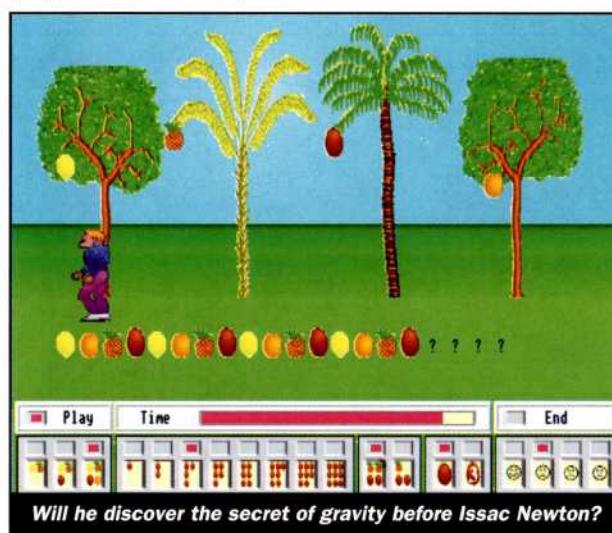
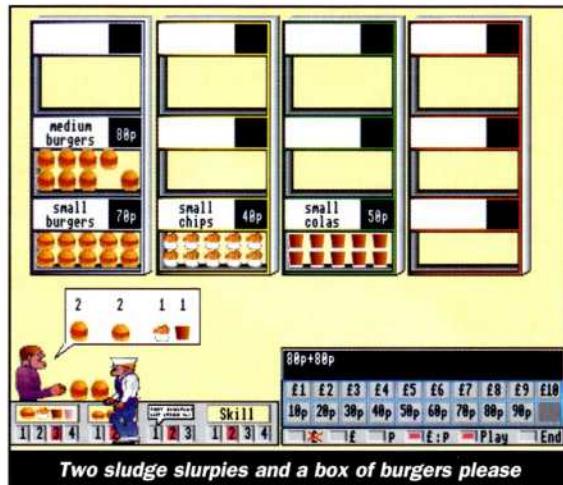
In **Coconuts**, the young user is offered a choice of up to nine different fruits displayed in a variety of sizes. Helpful Herbert must be guided to pick up the various fruits and place them in the correct spaces to complete a sequence. Simple and fun - my four-year-old managed it perfectly. To aid the user, the sequence number of each fruit can be displayed if required, and the four skill levels allow the parent to set the time and the number of mistakes allowed before the game is brought to an end.

**Burger Boy** has a much wider range of variables and can include money additions in pounds, pence or both. A rather rough-looking character appears in the shop and makes his request in both text and speech. The child must then select each of the required items from the shelf display. Once done, Helpful Herbert helpfully places each item on the counter. When all the requested items are present, the individual costs must be totalled before the customer eats everything ordered (including

the cartons), burps, begs excuse-me and retires.

**Tidy** is an altogether different program which is excellent for practising those prepositional statements like ... "put it on, under, behind, in front of" ... another item. The number of prepositions can be controlled, as can certain properties like "big, small", "long", "short" etc. In a scene familiar in every household, young Emma is ordered to tidy up her room. In speech and

text she instructs the user where each of her toys must be placed. By guiding her pet parrot with the mouse, the child's task is to pick up each item and place it in its correct location. The six skill levels



control the number of instructions given at any one time.

All three programs share good quality digitised pictures with smooth animations and make extensive use of entertaining speech. Unfortunately, there are one or two blemishes in the package: in **Coconuts**, pineapples are shown growing in palm trees(!). The customer's grammar is also less than perfect in **Burger Boy**. However, H.S. Software is doing what it can to rectify these. The only other element I felt was missing from these educational and entertaining games is the ability to monitor childrens' responses whilst they are using each program. A log of responses, accessed at the termination of a session, would provide a teacher or parent with a useful assessment of a child's performance and help to highlight areas which might need further work. Still, in the home this is of secondary importance and the fun of practising skills is paramount.



Eight to nine-year-olds definitely vote **Burger Boy** as the winner, whilst I think **Tidy** is of most value in language development and especially pertinent to infant and special schools. Fun and Games represents excellent value for money, finding a useful niche in most infant departments and ideally suited for home use.

## TV FUN AND GAMES

Like Fun and Games, TV Fun and Games comprises three entertaining programs which cover a wide range of abilities and skills. Aspects of the National Curriculum in English, Maths, Science and Geography are each visited to a greater or lesser extent.



**Weatherman** allows children to create their own weather maps, complete with a range of animated weather symbols of which Michael Fish would be proud. **Kevin's Quiz** attempts to recreate a TV style quiz game for up to three players and it essentially helps children practise their mental arithmetic.

**Gnomework** involves a 'TV' gardener who instructs his gnome to find various items and put them in the store.

Fun and Games (**£19.95 + VAT**) and TV Fun and Games (**£22.95 + VAT**) are available from: H.S. Software, 56 Hendrefoilan Avenue, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 9ZZ.

All the products reviewed in Infotainment are available from: **BEEBUG Ltd, 117 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4JS.**

If you have a credit card simply phone the Hotline on **0727 840305** to order. Subject to stock, you'll receive the goods within 48 hours.

Stock Code	Description	Price ex VAT
1944b	Prime Solver	£69
5554b	Fun & Games	£15
5555b	TV Fun & Games	£19
<b>Carriage, please add:</b>		
	1 item	£2
	2 items	£3
	3 items	£4



The programs share a user-interface almost identical to that in the Fun and Games suite, usefully aiding the progression from one suite to the next. They begin in the same manner: once the directory window appears the program is loaded by clicking on its picture-icon. Each program uses a 256-colour full screen

mode. Various options are available for customising the level of difficulty for each game: up to five skill levels per program and between three and nine consecutive games. In the case of **Kevin's Quiz** the multiplier, range and number of examples can also be set. **Weatherman** has obvious geographical relevance, whilst **Kevin's Quiz** covers addition, subtraction and multiplication tables up to one hundred. **Gnomework** helps children with matching, sorting, classification, counting, addition and the use of simple bar charts. As such, it is particularly suited to younger children.

Once again, the only element I felt was missing from all these games is the ability to monitor childrens' responses whilst they are using each program. A log of responses would

provide parents with a useful assessment of a child's performance and an indication of where further work was needed.

These are particularly attractive games which seven to eight-year-olds really enjoy. Excellent use of graphics, animations and sound make each program a pleasure to use. The kids vote **Weatherman** and **Kevin's Quiz** as winners whilst my vote goes to **Gnomework** for being of most value in language development. TV Fun and Games is a very worthy suite of programs which I would thoroughly recommend for home use, providing the programs are used in the context of practice and as an extension to number work that the child has undergone at school. The suite also represents very good value for money.

With all Fun and Games software some adult help is needed at first. Once over the initial short and shallow learning curve, the children find the programs quite straightforward to use. Overall each suite is appealing and prove a lovely medium in which to practise a range of numeracy and language skills. Look out for the newly released Lots More Fun and Games which promises to be as good if not better.



# Infotainment Easy Upgrades - RAM

Mike Williams introduces the first in a series of step by step guides on simple and worthwhile upgrades which you can make to your Acorn computer system.

**B**uying your first computer can seem exciting yet daunting at the same time. Everything is new, and there seems to be so much to understand. While learning to use a new computer can be a frustrating experience, it can also be very rewarding as you begin to master the facilities available to you. But buying the basic computer is only the first step, and it is inevitable that sooner or later you are going to want (or need) to expand the system you've already bought - and you thought the initial purchase was all there was to it!

One of the great features of an Acorn computer system is that it can be turned to so many different tasks. Even if you bought the computer for games playing, there is so much more that it can do - write your letters, handle your accounts, store names and addresses, play music, communicate around the world, and so on. But often, to exploit the computer to the full, you need to add to your original system. That's what we're going to be talking about in this series on *Easy Upgrades*. We'll tell you about worthwhile enhancements which you can make to your original system. We'll give you all the background information you need to make a decision; we'll tell you about the choices (if any) available to you, and we'll give you a blow by blow account of what's involved. That way you can make informed decisions, and stay in control.

This month we'll consider the issue of adding more memory (RAM) to your computer. If you feel you're already losing touch with what we're talking about, bear with us and all will be made clear. Note: upgrading Acorn's latest computer, the Risc PC, is entirely different and not therefore covered by this article.

## ADDING MORE MEMORY

Memory, often referred to as RAM, is used by the computer to store software and data when you are using it. If you are running a game, then the game program is first loaded into the computer's memory; if you are using a word processor (for letter writing, say) then the computer's RAM will be used to hold both the word processing software and the letter (the data) you are writing. The size of memory in your computer will determine the size of program (and how many programs) your computer can work with, and how much data can be stored. For example, a computer with minimal memory may be fine for writing letters, but may not have enough memory for writing company reports.

Every Acorn 32-bit computer comes with at least 1Mb (that's 1 Megabyte) of memory - don't worry what a megabyte is, but 1Mb could hold a couple of hundred pages of A4 text! If you are lucky enough to own an A3020, A4000 or A5000 then your machine will already have at least 2Mb of memory fitted, and all machines can be fitted with more. The A3000, the A3010 and some of the older A400 series are normally supplied with just 1Mb of RAM. How can you tell for certain? Well, that can be a little tricky. When you first switch your computer on look in the top left-hand corner of the screen. If you're quick enough you'll see a number appear - if you see 1024K you have 1Mb of RAM,

2048K means 2Mb of RAM, and 4096K means you have a relatively impressive 4Mb of RAM.

## MAKING THE DECISION

As time goes by, all computers seem to need more and more memory. Increasing the memory of your computer is generally a good idea, and even if you don't use all the extra capacity immediately, you almost certainly will in the future. If you only have 1Mb of memory at the moment, then we would strongly urge you to consider upgrading. Even some games will not run in less than 2Mb now, and if you are thinking of using your computer for word processing or anything similar, the extra memory is highly desirable. And it's not just that it gives you the extra storage in its own right; it lets you set up your machine so that it will work more quickly than one with less memory. So we would suggest that all users treat 2Mb of memory as a highly desirable minimum.

Do you need more than 2Mb of RAM? That's more difficult to answer. However, one of the great strengths of Acorn's 32-bit computers is the way in which you can have several programs running together in the same machine, switching from one to the other almost instantaneously. This is a tremendous advantage, particularly if you get into more serious computing, and in these circumstances we would suggest that 4Mb of RAM is well worth aiming for. However, while less than 2Mb of RAM will



certainly impose some constrictions and limitations on what you can do, increasing memory up to 4Mb of RAM has more to do with improved convenience and speed of use, rather than with overcoming absolute constraints.

There is also one further consideration in some cases. If you upgrade your computer to 2Mb of memory, but later decide you really need 4Mb of memory, then the original upgrade will have to be jettisoned, and a new 4Mb RAM card fitted. Acorn only designed the likes of the A3000 and A3010 to have a maximum of 2Mb of memory, so it's a feat of ingenuity on the part of other suppliers that these machines can be upgraded to 4Mb at all. Table 1 shows the options and prices of RAM upgrades available from Beebug Ltd. Similar upgrades are available from other sources.

local dealer will no doubt help for a nominal sum. Before removing the lid and peering into the computer make sure that it is disconnected from the mains supply. It is safest to fit the upgrade after the computer has been unplugged for a couple of hours (this allows time for any capacitors in the mains power supply to discharge). Also you should remove all other cable connections as this will make the unit easier to manoeuvre. When handling any components or cards, only remove them from their protective packaging at the last minute, and always try to hold them by their edges avoiding direct contact with any pins or other exposed metal parts.

Well there it is - RAM upgrades are probably the first and most popular upgrade. They are easy to do and a satisfying task to have achieved. Do have a go.

Next issue we'll bring you step-by-step details on how to upgrade to RISC OS 3. If you already have RISC OS 3 we will describe some of its new features, in particular auto booting.

# EASY UPGRADES

## FITTING MEMORY UPGRADES

Many memory upgrades can be fitted by anyone who is prepared to take the necessary time and care. In certain circumstances however, soldering is required, so check with your dealer beforehand. The key to fitting an upgrade yourself is to read any instructions carefully and do a dummy run, then you should encounter no problems at all. Computers are more robust than you might imagine. However, if you do have any doubts at all about your abilities, then we recommend you take your machine along to your Acorn dealer and ask him to do the job for you. It doesn't take more than a few minutes, and provided that you buy the RAM upgrade from them, there should be no extra charge for this service.

As for fitting the chips or board itself, many users find that getting the lid off their computer is more difficult than fitting the memory upgrade! Most suppliers of upgrades will include full fitting instructions which are designed for the absolute beginner. Do read them through before starting, and if it all looks too daunting then your

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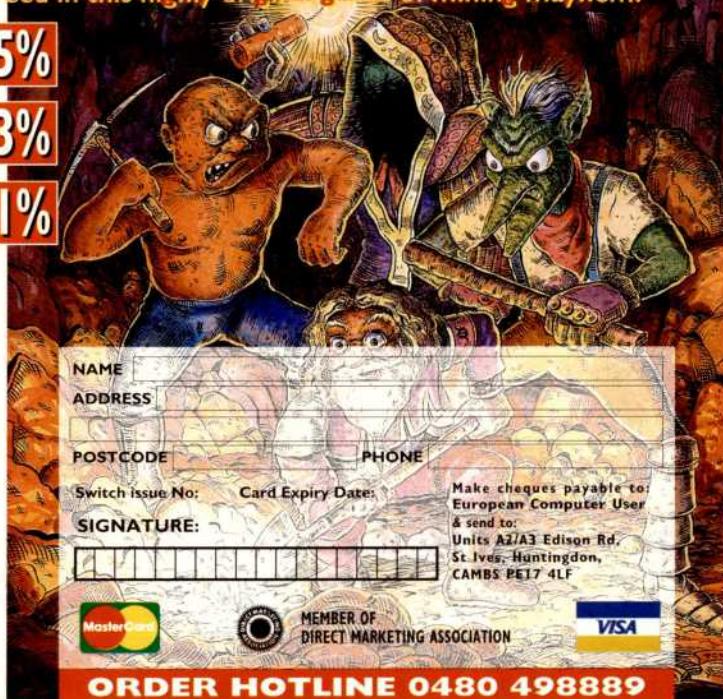
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## Spot The Blot

Try and spot the objects that are reversed, inverted or missing in two similar pictures (helps children with visual perception/discrimination skills).





**E**very computer is more than a games machine, and this is certainly true for Acorn computers. The purpose of this series is to show just how much more can be achieved with your computer, and without spending any more money at all, at least to start with.

Each article will lead into a practical project which will give you hands on experience of using your Acorn computer, enable you to develop increasing expertise with the system, and provide something of practical benefit. Even if you have never used an Acorn computer before, we'll be explaining everything in easy to understand English, though inevitably you need to learn a little of the jargon as we go along. That just enables us to describe what's going on more precisely.

**Mike Williams, paintbrush in hand, leads the way.**

Every Archimedes system comes with a range of built-in software, of which the three main constituents are applications called Edit, Paint and Draw. With just these three applications you can be a computer artist, undertake word processing and desktop publishing, and create complex diagrams and forms.

To start the ball rolling we're going to look at **Paint**, and we'll see how we can use this to create interesting personalised backdrops for your Desktop. In future articles we'll build on knowledge gained to show how much more can be achieved by using all these applications more cooperatively. In the meantime this application was chosen as it does not require any other hardware, such as a printer, for it to be immediately usable.

**Paint** is essentially a painting package (surprise, surprise) and the images created with **Paint** are saved as files known as sprite files. An individual image created with **Paint** is called a sprite.

## GETTING STARTED WITH PAINT

To get the **Paint** application running you will need to locate where it is stored. Those with earlier Acorn machines may still have RISC OS 2 and should refer to the box accompanying this article. Those with RISC OS 3 should look on the icon bar, which runs across the foot of the screen. There you'll find a multi-coloured symbol labelled Apps. Click on this with Select, the left-hand mouse button, to open a window showing **Paint**, **Draw**, **Edit** and several other applications, and double-click, again with Select, over the **Paint** icon. Very quickly **Paint** will appear on the icon bar.

There's just one thing we need to think about before we actually get started. Most Acorn Archimedes systems operate in either 16 colour or 256 colour screen modes. For most purposes, a 16 colour mode is probably best, but it doesn't really matter. If you are going to use a scanned colour image as a backdrop then

you will normally need to work in a 256 colour mode to see this to best effect. So that we have access to a good range of colours we will work with a 256 colour mode, such as 15 or 28, here.

The Archimedes RISC OS 3 Desktop provides a facility called a Pinboard. If you have RISC OS 2, then refer to the box titled 'RISC OS 2 versus RISC OS 3'. Like a pinboard in real life this allows us to 'pin' things up which we might want to refer to. It also enables us to provide a more colourful backdrop to the Desktop than the boring uniform grey which you see at switch-on. Backdrops are created from sprites, for which we need **Paint**, so let's get on with the show.

## DEFINING THE SIZE

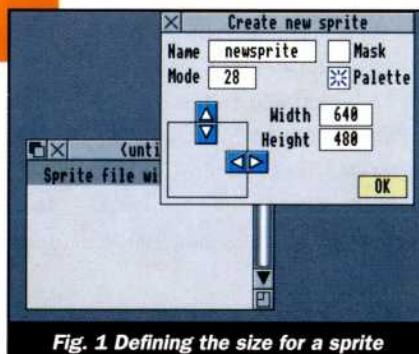


Fig. 1 Defining the size for a sprite

To create a new sprite simply click with Select over the **Paint** icon on the icon bar. This opens two windows as shown in figure 1. A sprite's size is measured in pixels (dots of colour), and the default size produces a sprite which just fills the screen. For what we are going to do, click in the Width and Height boxes in

turn, and change the numbers to 64 in both cases. Check also that the mode number is correct, and if not change it to 15 or 28 in the same way. When you are satisfied click on the OK button.

At this point the screen display may seem more confusing than helpful. You should be able to identify four windows in all: two small ones looking pretty boring called <untitled> and newsprite, a window showing all the colours available in your current screen mode, and a window showing the Tools provided by **Paint** (figure 2). The window called

newsprite is the one we shall be working on, but since we haven't done anything yet it just shows as a white square with a black border. What we are going to do is to create a sprite which can then be replicated to form a tiled backdrop to the Desktop.

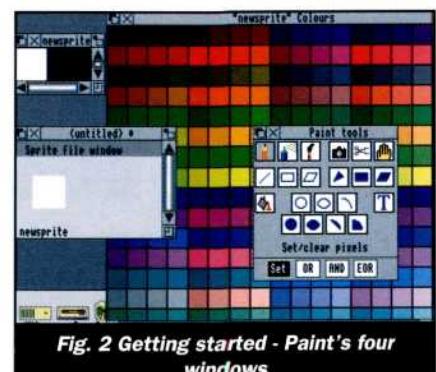


Fig. 2 Getting started - Paint's four windows

When working with small objects using **Paint** it is often a good idea to magnify our work so that it is easier to see what we are doing. Move the pointer over the white square in newsprite, and click with Menu, the middle mouse button. From the menu which then appears (this is **Paint's** main menu) move to the Zoom option, and then slide right. Click three times on the upward pointing triangle to change the ratio to 4:1 (figure 3).

*Continues over...*

# Infotainment

...Continued from xiii

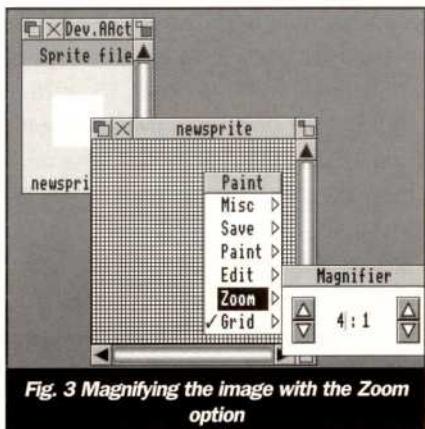


Fig. 3 Magnifying the image with the Zoom option

## USING THE FILL TOOL

Next we want to colour the whole of the sprite area; it doesn't really matter what shade you choose as it can always be changed later, but you need something which will look reasonably appealing on the screen. You choose a colour by simply clicking over your choice in **Paint**'s colours window. We also need to select a tool to use. In **Paint**'s Tools window click over the spilling tin of paint at the left - this is the Fill tool. Click once over the sprite itself and it will change to the shade you have selected.

## WIELDING THE PAINTBRUSH

Now choose a contrasting colour, and select the tool shaped like a paintbrush. Move the pointer back over the sprite area, and the pointer will change into a very rough outline of a circle. Position this so that there are exactly four lines of pixels between the 'brush' and both the

left-hand and top edges of the window containing the sprite, and click once (see figure 4). If you find it tricky to get this exactly right, you may find it helpful to increase the zoom ratio to 8:1. I

also found I had to leave an apparent six lines of pixels to get the four I was looking for. Oh well, never mind.

If you make a mistake, simply select your original background colour, and paint out your offending 'blob' and try again. One tip: if you can't remember which colour you selected, just point at an example of the colour in the sprite window,

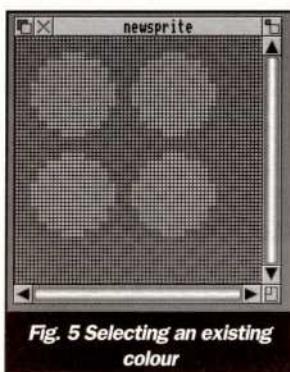


Fig. 5 Selecting an existing colour

click with Menu and from the Paint option slide right and click on Select colour (see figure 5).

Once you have got one circle correct you need to create three more so that the four together form a regular pattern, with four lines of background pixels immediately to the left and above the coloured circle (figure 6). If you don't like the colours you have selected, now is a convenient time to change them. Just select a new colour, and using the Fill tool click on the colour to be changed. If you are going to follow my intentions, keep all four circles the same colour.

The next stage is to give each of the circles a 3D effect as though light was shining from top-left to bottom-right. The circles will be made to appear as though recessed. To do this we shall colour in the pixels round the top and left edges of each circle in black (colour 0), and the pixels round the bottom and right edges white (colour 255 if your in a 256-colour mode, colour 15 if in a 16-colour mode). The best tool to use for this job is the one which looks like a pencil, which is used for colouring individual pixels.

The end result should look something like figure 7. It doesn't matter if your shading is not exactly the same as mine, but you should try to make sure that the shading of all four circles is identical for the best effect

There is one final thing we need to do to make everything tidy and shipshape. We have an excess of pixels to the right and below our four circles. We need to cut these away so that when multiple copies of our sprite are fitted together, we will get a regular pattern. Click Menu over your sprite and follow the Edit arrow to reveal a number of sub-options - the ones we will need are Delete columns and Delete rows. In both cases you can specify the number of rows or columns to be deleted. Deletion will delete the column under the pointer (which will be shaded so that you can see it on the screen), and additional columns to the right as specified. Deleting rows works in a similar way, but deletes the selected row and others above. If you find it difficult to count rows of pixels on the screen, just delete one row or column at a time. When you have finished, the sprite should have been trimmed so that it looks like figure 8.

It is well time that we make sure we save a safe copy of our work. You will need to have open a directory viewer for a directory on either your hard disc, or on a suitable floppy. Now go to the untitled window and click with Menu over it. A five-option menu will appear: slide right on the Save option and edit the filename

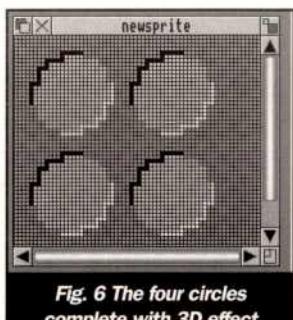


Fig. 6 The four circles complete with 3D effect

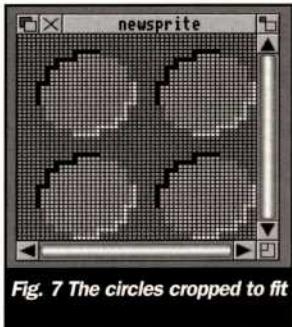


Fig. 7 The circles cropped to fit



Fig. 8 The final image



to whatever you choose. Then drag the sprite icon from the Save box to the directory viewer opened previously.

We're now ready to try out the effect of creating a backdrop. The Pinboard feature of RISC OS 3 should be automatically in operation. Simply drag the sprite file just saved anywhere over an empty area of the Desktop and release the Select button. The sprite icon should stick to the backdrop, and can be treated just like the one in the directory viewer.

If you now move the pointer over the sprite icon on the Pinboard and press Menu you will see Pinboard's main menu - the option we're interested in is Make backdrop. If you slide the mouse pointer to the right you will see that there are three sub-options - the one which we want is Tiled. As soon as this is selected the pattern which we have created is repeated as though it were a tile (see figure 9).

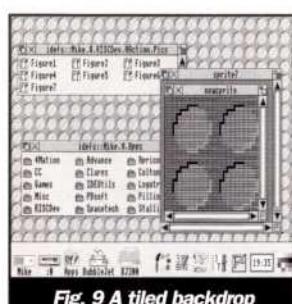


Fig. 9 A tiled backdrop

If you don't like the colour effects you can still go back and change them. Let's tidy up the screen and get rid of any open windows by clicking on their close icons (the cross near a window's top left-hand corner). Using either the Pinboard copy, or the one in the directory viewer, double-click on the sprite you saved previously.

A window will open showing a (small) copy of your sprite. Double-click on this in turn to open the sprite window (the first window is called the sprite file window). Now select any alternative colour and use Paint's Fill tool as described before to fill and change any colour in your sprite. If necessary, make sure that all occurrences of the colour are changed.

If you wish you can separately save the modified version of your backdrop sprite. Click the Menu button over the sprite file window, and follow the Save option, but this time type in a new name for your sprite file and drag to the directory viewer to save as before. If you create several versions of your basic sprite, all of these can be positioned on the Pinboard, and you can try out the effect of each in turn. Note that there is no need to remove one backdrop before creating another.

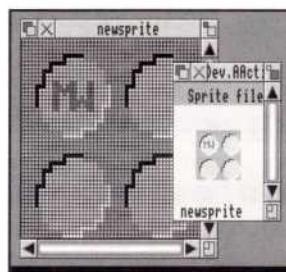


Fig. 10 The customised version of the backdrop sprite

I made one further modification when experimenting with this, and that was to add my initials (MW) into one of the four circles in the basic sprite. Using this then produced a customised backdrop for my Desktop (figure 10). Alternatively, if you have a favourite scanned image or picture which you would like to use as a backdrop then this is just as easy. Drop the sprite icon onto the Pinboard, and from the Pinboard menu, go to Make backdrop as before, but this time use one of the other options. Centred will place the sprite centrally on the Desktop, while Scaled will scale the sprite image so that it completely fills the backdrop (see figure 11). Scanned images are most often saved in 256-colour modes, so if you don't use one of these the rendering of the image will look pretty awful. On the other hand, using 256-colour modes when it's not essential can slow the computer down.

Once you have created a backdrop for your Desktop, you need to save it so that it can be readily recalled for use at any later time. Decide where you are going to store the backdrop, and open the corresponding directory viewer. Then press Menu over the backdrop and use the Save option (see figure 12). You can call your customised Pinboard what you like, but using the default name makes the file's function very clear.

From now on, whenever you switch your computer on, double-clicking on your Pinboard file will restore your backdrop to the screen. The process can also be completely automated (using a Boot file) but that's another story.

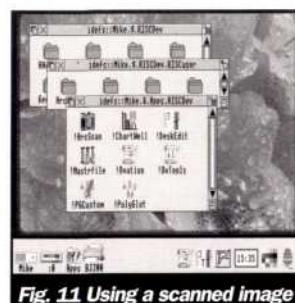


Fig. 11 Using a scanned image as a backdrop

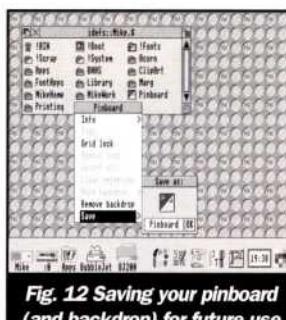


Fig. 12 Saving your pinboard (and backdrop) for future use

## RISC OS 2 VERSUS RISC OS 3

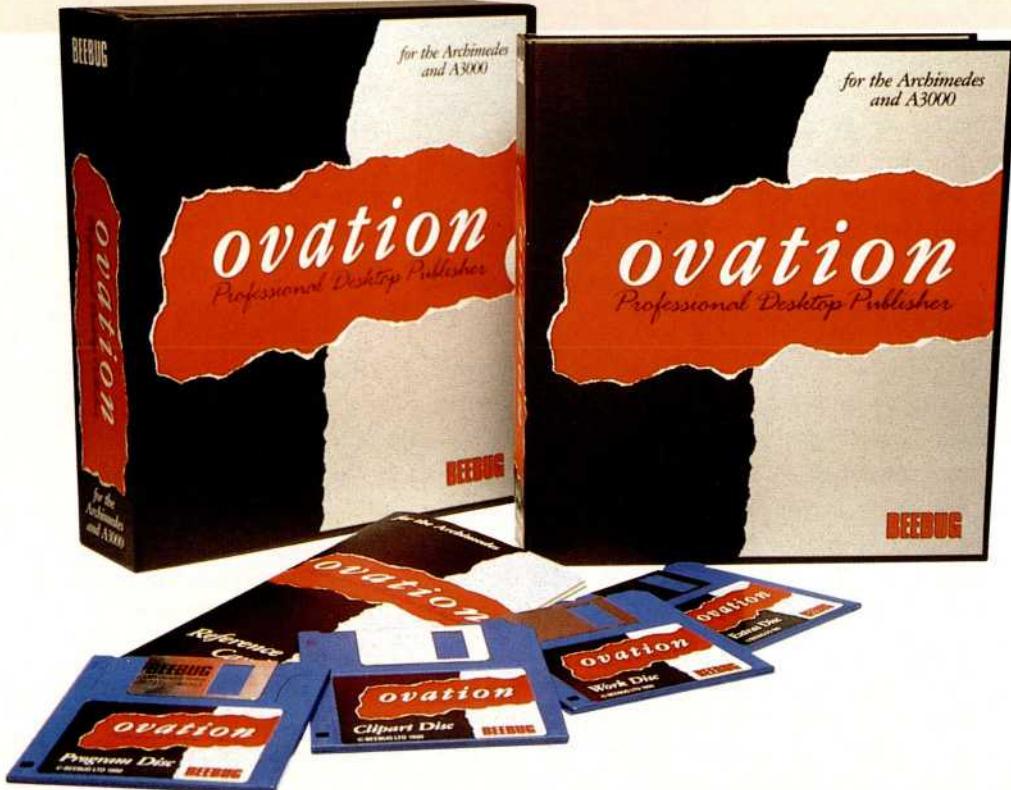
If you have one of Acorn's older computers such as the A3000, 310 or 410, it is possible that you may still have the original version of the operating system, RISC OS 2. A considerably enhanced version of this, RISC OS 3.1, was made available as an upgrade for these computers shortly after the launch of the A5000 in 1992. A very simple way to see whether your computer has RISC OS 2 or 3 is to examine the icon bar across the bottom of the screen - if the icon bar contains a cream icon with the text 'Apps' beneath it, then you've got RISC OS 3. For the merits of upgrading see our article in the next issue.

Since the Apps directory does not exist in RISC OS 2, where can you find Paint and its colleagues. If your computer has a hard drive, you may have already copied Paint onto it, so simply locate it and double-click with Select on its icon. If you don't have a hard drive, you can find Paint on Applications disc 1.

Another difference between RISC OS 2 and RISC OS 3 is that RISC OS 2 does not have a Pinboard. This is not a serious problem - there are numerous 'sticky backdrop' applications available. Several of them are actually more powerful than Pinboard, and you'll find one of them on the cover disc. It's called AABackdrop and will give RISC OS 2 some of the functions of RISC OS 3's Pinboard. Information on how to use AABackdrop is provided on the disc pages.

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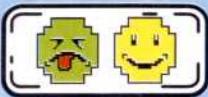
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# FLASHBACK

## Who needs Arnold when Conrad's around?

Groggy and dazed, muscular boffin Mat Tizard wakes up in a jungle to find he's lost his memory. A seriously heavy night? Or was he kidnapped by aliens? Only the amazing holocube can tell him the answer, so he'd better find it soon... there are some very weird noises around!

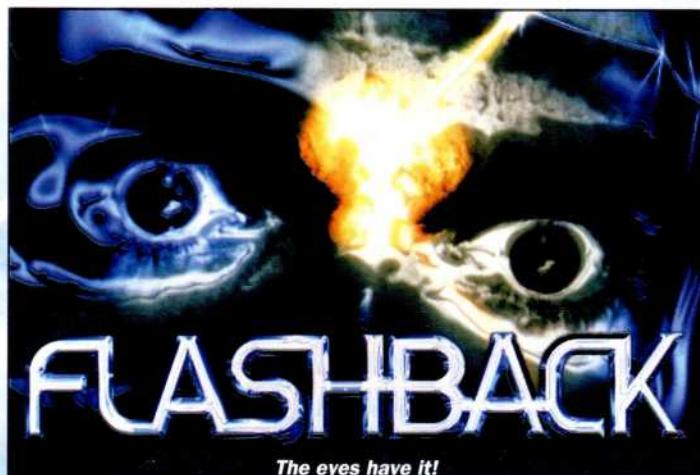
Too often in this job you come across games which look wonderful but have absolutely zero gameplay and atmosphere. Here, we've got an arcade adventure with both, in buckets; graphics as good as you've ever seen, animation to die for and puzzles of the standard I remember from games like Citadel and Exile back on the

own U.S. Gold, who is flirting with the Acorn market again after a long gap. This time they're onto a sure-fire winner. The game took the 16-bit world by storm a year ago and now it's going to blow us away completely.

Cyril Smith). Of course the aliens aren't best pleased when they find that he's sussed out what's going on, so they stick Conrad in an asylum... from which he escapes, and is just about to spill the beans when he's shot, loses consciousness and wakes up on Titan. Sounds confusing? That's partly the idea; you're supposed to be confused to help put you in

it's just Conrad against the baddies, and he has to earn money, find ID papers, get a job... all this with no further clues to guide you except those you pick up on the way. In later levels he ends up being locked away again, escaping again, competing in a Running Man-type gameshow to win a ticket to Earth and simply LOADS of other stuff. I won't reveal the end and spoil it for you because it's so much fun finding out what's going to happen next yourself!

Many of the puzzles involve manipulating some of the objects you find lying around the place. Often, when something is picked up or activated, a cartoon animation is played to illustrate what's going on. And I don't just mean a little line drawing, I'm talking proper Manga-type animations here, some of which last over 20 seconds (see box). The effect of these sequences is that you really feel involved in the narrative of the game, and not removed



Flashback is plotted as twistingly as a thriller, and it borrows some of the best bits and pieces from classic sci-fi films. The story so far... You play Conrad B. Hart, a

the frame of mind of your character, a kind of 'method-gaming'!

When you wake up you're stranded in what I can only describe as a 'techno-jungle'



Another long stretch of strangeness for our man Conrad

Beeb. This is really a hybrid of computer game crossed with high-suspense movie. It makes use of music and animation sequences in a very cinematic way and this adds enormously to the sense of involvement and interactivity. Flashback is a collaboration between French developers Delphine, and Birmingham's

research boffin who has made the unsettling discovery that Earth's leaders are being replaced by ecto-morphs from another planet, a la Invasion of the Bodysnatchers. This he deduces from the fact that their molecular density seems to be unusually high (though there'd be no telling the difference with people like

and you have absolutely no idea what to do next. Luckily, the holocube which you find early on in level one reveals some of the background in "hello, this is yourself speaking", Total Recall-style: you left yourself a recorded message in case the aliens were to catch you and wipe your memory. From here on in,

from it as a mere player. Objects in the game aren't just trophies, they actually have to be charged up, programmed or given to the right person at the right time in order to achieve the desired result.

The graphics in this game are quite the best I've seen in any arcade adventure. The

# REVIEWS



*Our Conrad goes Jungle crazy*

backgrounds, which are themed for each level - ranging from a gameshow set to a wonderfully slimy alien world - are practically works of art in themselves. Long gone are the days when platforms and ladders meant sophisticated game design - this baby is complex. The soundtrack has a life of its own, fading in and out with fast music when exciting bits are about to happen - Bond-style - and Conrad has his own charming repertoire of grunts and wheezes as you put him through his paces.



*Conrad asks directions from the helpful aliens with guns*

To make any progress at all in the game, you have to become proficient at a number of different physical skills such as climbing, leaping, ducking, rolling and drawing your gun at exactly the right moment. There are many different key combinations to be found and experimented with, all of which cause Conrad to do various physically demanding things. The moves change in response to the environment in which they're performed; for example if he leaps across a ravine and doesn't quite make it to the other side, he might

dangle precariously from the edge and perhaps haul himself up if you can respond quickly enough. You really do have to spend quite a bit of time learning and messing about with the controls, and it's quite entertaining just making Conrad smack into walls and teeter precariously over chasms! There are three skill levels built in which alter the speed and firepower of nasties and also set the difficulty of puzzles on each level. Some parts of the game do require a lot of practice to get right, but you can store your position at

animated as Conrad, and some of them are capable of morphing or evaporating at will, so it can be very tricky to get rid of them at times (especially if they're wearing armoured jet packs!). The bad guys all have built-in intelligence of their own and will follow you around responding to your actions. And the game has got humour too. One set piece which had me in stitches for a good ten minutes happens on the first level. Two barbarian guards are standing below your ledge chatting animatedly about



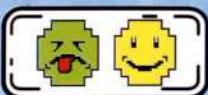
*"Bloody dreary street graffiti," muses our man*

'save points', usually located close to areas which are going to require a lot of trial and error to get through in one piece.

The most striking thing about Flashback is the attention to detail in all aspects of the game. For instance, if you land heavily on a jungle platform, mulch and leaf litter become dislodged from the underside and fall off. Also, spent ammo cartridges pop out of your gun, in a different direction each time. The enemies you meet in the game are just as well

how big their guns are when you suddenly drop between them and scare the living daylights out of them. If you keep your head well down they proceed to try and shoot you, but end up killing each other. That's barbarians for you.

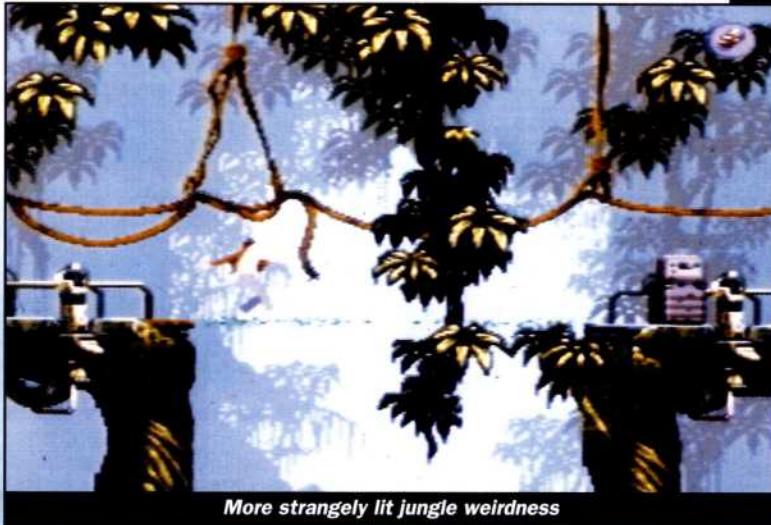
Are you still there? Why aren't you down at the shops? Haven't I convinced you yet? Sell your Grandmother, sell your dog, sell your computer... on second thoughts, don't do that or you won't be able to play it... Sell something anyway, and buy this game



## ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

If you've played the demo version of Flashback on the cover disc, you will no doubt be wondering how the ultra-smooth animation of your character was achieved. As Des Lynham

on the screen, moving seamlessly from a forward roll into a running jump and then into a crouch, with gun drawn. This technique is known as rotoscoping, and is used by big-screen special effects wizards all the time.



More strangely lit jungle weirdness

and that-woman-with-the-enormous-mouth would say, "how did they do that?" Well, six actors and a professional stuntman, all of similar build, were employed to run around in a studio jumping around like loonies into walls, and dangling from ledges, until the designers had enough footage to selectively digitise and distil into Conrad's character. In all there are 550 frames of animation in the game for Conrad alone. The effect is quite breathtaking and Conrad tirelessly does

your bidding

## THOSE CARTOONS IN FULL

The story behind the many cartoons which pop up from time to time is no less impressive. They're all stored as vector graphics as opposed to bitmaps. This means that it is only necessary to store descriptions of the shapes of the various objects in the game. From these the objects can be recreated at any size and in any colour without loss of detail. The author tells me that there are around



"Please can I have my ball back Mister?"

sixty animations in all, making for a grand total of over 10 minutes of incidental cartoons. This is really pretty

damn impressive, especially when you consider that nothing is loaded in during play and the whole game needs only 720K to run.



Our man throws a stick at the huge pink thing in a desperate effort to stun it



**ACORN ACTION  
VERDICT**

Flashback has to be played to be believed. I'll eat my mouse if you don't reckon this is the classiest arcade adventure ever. Buy it, and prove to U.S. Gold that we know a good game when we see one!

**92%**

Best Feature: Sheer attention to detail and atmosphere.  
Worst Feature: Time consuming - why did this thing have to arrive just before my exams?

**Product** Flashback  
**Price** £24.95 ex. VAT  
**Supplier** U.S. Gold  
Units 2 & 3, Halford Way, Halford,  
Birmingham B6 7AX  
**Orderline** 021-625 3388  
**Requirements:** Archimedes with 1Mb RAM.

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**ACORN ACTION**, YOU CAN TAKE  
ADVANTAGE OF OUR SPECIAL  
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**OFFER**  
**£19.99**  
R.R.P. £29.98

**PRICE**

## DIGGERS

The game of  
cunning, money making and  
subterranean adventure.

You've just arrived on Zarg and you've got one month to mine yourself a fortune. The only problem is which race of unruly diggers are you going to choose! Fabulous treasures and amazing discoveries await the successful few.

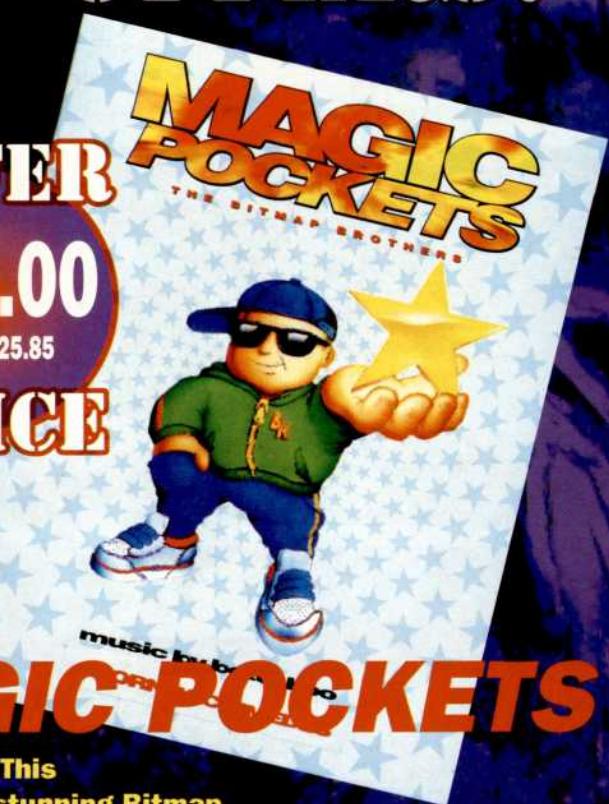
The planet Zarg has been described as a miner's paradise, a planet of riches beyond man's wildest dreams. Unfortunately, the planet is beleaguered by a whole host of hostile elements, all conspiring to protect her mineral wealth. After years of unscrupulous and unlicensed digging, the authorities have been forced to limit all mining activity to one month in a year in an effort to constrain the exploitation of the planet's abundant resources of precious gems.

Weary from a long journey, you arrive at the Zargon Mineral Trading Centre on the Glorious 412th, the first day of one month's frenzied digging activity. All that remains is to choose one of the four races of indigenous miners. But beware, many have tried to exploit the riches of Zarg but few have succeeded. Get digging.

**OFFER**  
**£18.00**  
R.R.P. £25.85

**PRICE**

## MAGIC POCKETS



This stunning Bitmap Brothers production has everything for the avid games player: bonus games, secret rooms, loads and loads of power-ups, stacks of levels, heaps of weapons and swarms of intelligent nasties.

To complete Magic Pockets, you have to successfully find all the Bitmap Kid's Toys and reach home, only 26 huge levels away.

Travel through caves, mountains, jungles and lakes on your incredible journey. The Bitmap Kid is the Indiana Jones of games land.

The kid's got a whole host of weapons in his magic pocket, from whirlwinds and clouds, to snowballs and ice cubes. Beat up a gorilla, bounce on a baddy with your space hopper, turn a nasty into a Swiss role with a snowball, or send one spinning in a whirlwind.

Just look what the reviewers had to say about it. "What an absolute triumph! this is a riot of gameplay... could even be the Bitmap's best effort yet!" - THE ONE. "It's faultless. Great scrolling, great graphics, great music... excellent, imaginative, 'the mutt's nuts'." - ZERO.

You can't go wrong with this one.

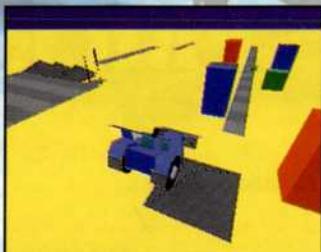


# REVIEWS



**D**riving freaks have been granted a second lap of madness in the form of **Stunt Racer 2000 Extra Tracks**. Sam Greenhill checks out the new tarmac from behind the wheel of the world's craziest car and discovers, to his surprise, that there are others who are even crazier than himself.

The greatest ever driving game is back, and with it even more madness. These extra 17 tracks for Stunt Racer 2000 have been put together by the same nutters that created the original set. This is apparent from the fact that only a complete nutter could have designed them in the first place. Consider the



*Stunt Racer's biggest jump can launch you a good few miles... upwards*

jumps so steep that they send your car flying vertically upwards at horrendous speeds, or the elevated tracks that suddenly end,

leaving you to drop about 150 feet and pray that your car makes it in one piece.



*A green racing car leaps over a red triangle between two yellow signs with crosses on them*

However, the designers are not nearly as crazy as they used to be. At first glance, the new tracks seem a little tame when compared to the originals. In the original set a



*The real question is, how the heck did you get up there in the first place?*

lot of thought went into making the tracks as wild and wicked as possible, with loop-the-loops, 'surf' tracks that actually moved like a great big wave, and totally bizarre features like huge hammers that tried to squash your car. Like I say, completely nutty.

## SO WHAT'S NEW?

The first few tracks contain nothing particularly new, and to any seasoned Stunt Racer

# Stunt Racer Extra Tracks Brought to you by the World Federation Entertainments Network

## STUNT RACER 2000 FEATURES

- Normal racing rules apply, but not necessarily the laws of physics. Then again, it is the year 2037
- Loop-the-loops, banked corners, wave bridges, jumps, tunnels, twister jumps, car lifts, track hammers, cliff drops, car parks, vertical take off jumps!...
- Just like Hard Drivin' except for one awful omission: no cow
- Win races and receive cash to buy add-ons for your car: nitro boost, mega boost, extra tyre grip, faster engine... even masonic help is available at a price!
- One or two player, either split screen or two computers joined via the serial cable
- Review the last race from a controllable 'helicopter' camera recording, from within the car or the trackside cameras
- Great oodles of madness in all directions

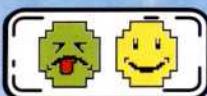


*Yes, that thing in the background IS part of the track!*

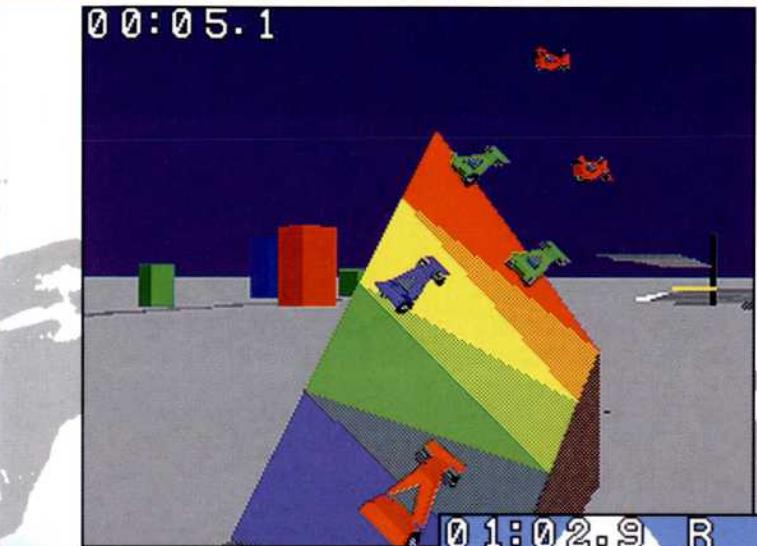
driver who is prepared for the unexpected they will seem, well, sort of 'expected', really. You leap into the car, wait for the green light then floor it off the grid in anticipation of an exotic adventure ahead. Around every corner you imagine some strange and wonderful contortion of the track or some crazy stunt that only a stupid turnip would consider survivable.

## STILL THE WORLD'S GREATEST EVER DRIVING GAME

That said, Stunt Racer is still the world's greatest ever driving game and the new tracks are still distinctively, er, Stunt Racerish. The first little hint that the extra tracks start where the old ones left off is the way in which the other cars leave you for dust the moment anyone yells 'Go'. Clearly, you



00:05.1



**What do you get if you cross suicidal lemmings with Stunt Racer? This.**

are expected to be a competent driver by now and just in case you are in any doubt, the first jump is a virtually impossible leap across the snowy landscape and the



**A quiet corner gives time to relax and look back on your achievements... but what's that big wavy thing in the distance?**

landing is on a banked corner in another part of the track! The other cars are crazier than ever before and have absolutely no fear of winding up as scrap metal. Winning a race is something you can only wonder about.



**VERDICT**  
If you have exhausted the original 17 Stunt Racer tracks then Extra Tracks is the next logical step and you'll have tremendous fun destroying your car on the new roads of nuttiness.

But there's nothing to be gained in buying Extra Tracks if you have yet to complete the original challenge.

**Best feature:** There are some crazy new tracks to race around if you have completed the first set.

**Worst feature:** That is all they are, whereas we were all expecting them to take us beyond the bounds of craziness. Oh well.

01:02.9 R



**Just think what a 300 ton mallet could do to your no claims bonus!**

Nevertheless, the tracks do get bigger and bolder and some of them are downright ridiculous. On one of them you pass under about ten accelerator-bars, hitting the jump at about 300 mph and launching yourself into orbit. You fly about 2,000 feet up, for at least half a mile before heading back down to earth. And on the last track it takes

an incredible six minutes to complete just one lap, a stonker of a lap, filled with all the madness of the rest put together. The crucial element of the original game is still alive and kicking: on Track 4 you have to coincide hitting the super-bumps - that rocket your car through the air - with cars coming the other way, so that you fly over them rather than kiss bumpers at a combined speed of about 400 mph!

00:16.2 R



**Proof that the Loch Ness Monster is alive and well.**

**Product:** Stunt Racer 2000 Extra Tracks

**Requirements:** Archimedes 1Mb + Stunt Racer 2000

**Supplier:** The Fourth Dimension  
1 Percy Street  
Sheffield S3 8AU  
0742 700661

**Price:** £19.95 ex.VAT

## HOW TO USE EXTRA TRACKS

If you've already bought Extra Tracks but don't know how to use them, read on. We're not trying to be patronising - it is just that the new tracks come with no instructions at all and it isn't immediately obvious that you have to click the middle mouse button on the squiggly tracks icon at the top of the configure game screen which is accessed from the main game set up screen, in order to load the new data. So, in case you didn't catch all that, here it is again: load the game as normal, go into the 'configure game' screen and advance the Alter Track Series icon from 1 to 2. Then play as normal and insert the new tracks disc when prompted by the game. Obvious, isn't it?

# REVIEWS

Whoever said asteroids weren't romantic? They've got magnetic attraction.



Ever played chicken with an asteroid? Mat Lizard - game for anything - gives it a whirl and discovers to his horror that these ones are magnetically attracted to his ship! Nevertheless, bravery, skill and spaceship - loads of luck get him through.

This is a completely original concept for a game. Zoom about, weaving through a field of deadly asteroids and doing battle with enemy ships. Hang on a minute? Hasn't that been done before? Like in Asteroids? Well, it is similar in concept to Asteroids, but there the comparisons end, because Magnetoids literally adds a whole new dimension to it. Yes, we're talking 3D Asteroids here, with loads of extra ships, power-ups and other goodies, and pretty darn excellent it is too. Oh, I almost forgot, the asteroids are magnetic (hence the name) so the infernal things tend to sneak up behind you if you don't keep your wits about you. I wouldn't have believed that this would work as a game if somebody had described it to me, but it works like a dream. Now I can't understand why nobody thought of it before!

Graphically, the game is stunning. All the objects and ships are shaded with respect to a sole light source - the nearby sun - and this lends a

real vividness to the coloured surfaces. The light-sourcing means that you often get very atmospheric views of dark asteroids coming at you from out of the sun. A dappled shading effect is also employed that blends two very similar colours together by filling alternate pixels with each. This means the effective number of colours is greatly increased, so that you hardly notice the changes as objects rotate; let's face it, you're gonna be too busy shooting at everything anyway! The background stars all have rather attractive halos around them and move about as you rotate. They are affected by perspective, which gives the effect of playing inside a giant spherical arena with big painted stars on the inside. It's quite cosy really.

You can choose to fly one of two different ships, each with its own flight characteristics. The first is flat, with a gun on each side and handles in the same way as in Elite - pitch, yaw, climb, dive. The second (my favourite) is far meaner and handles considerably better, rotating like a turret whichever way you point it. The mouse is by far the easiest way to control your ship. Early on, when using the keyboard (set A) I discovered that holding down all four direction keys at once seems to generate the code for Escape, so your ship immediately explodes. Very pretty but it could really ruin your pilot's day.

After a few shots, the asteroids disintegrate into two or three chunks, which then

split in two again with further hits. The chunks are very nicely designed, as asteroid designs go - they've got lots of holes and bits sticking out,

also an energy bar (which can't be replenished) to tell you how close you are to meeting your maker - probably as close as the nearest asteroid if my experience is anything to go by. You can sustain several rounds of enemy laser fire and one or two knocks from some of the



## GAMEPLAY

Basically, unlike the old-style Asteroids where the secret was to keep still and rotate yourself to blast things, here it's best to keep moving all the time since the asteroids are magnetically drawn your way. The trick is not to hang around in the same place too long, or you may find yourself with an unexpected asteroid enema! You have to keep your eye on the scanner up top to work out which ones have managed to get up to speed and are about to smash into you. I bet you can't finish this game without suffering a nervous breakdown because, after about level 10, it's as much as you can do to stay alive, let alone aim at anything!

Someone really should convert Magnetoids to work on the R360 rotating arcade game (there's one in the London Trocadero), where you sit inside and the whole unit swivels around three axes to give complete freedom of movement (also causing your loose change to fall out of your pockets.)

making them look like they really have just broken apart. You keep track of the location of ships, asteroids and power-ups using a scanner which I'm sure I've seen somewhere before... Even if it's hardly new, the Elite-type scanner is probably the best tool for the job here anyway, and you do have to train yourself to pay attention to it at the same time as flying the ship. It's amazing how good you become at reading off the positions and velocities of objects after a while. There's

smaller asteroid chunks, but after that it's 'adios muchachos', and you're on to the next life.

Each time you're hit, your ship recoils from the impact with just the right amount of momentum and spins out of control; it's so well done that I found myself flinching in my chair sometimes! At the top of the screen, another instrument displays all targets currently in range, with different icons for asteroids, chunks and each kind of ship. There are nearly 30 classes of

craft in all, including enormous armed space stations, pointy things which disintegrate into four-ships-and-a-power-up, klingon-esque carriers (which also release fighters) and a massive floating cannon which slowly rotates towards you and then lobs whole asteroids your way! Basically you've got trouble, and things become nothing short of manic as the levels go by.

On the sound side, there's some excellent Vangelis-inspired music as you enter your score on the table, although the main theme tune begins to grate after a while. Each new level opens with an ominous hum, which get deeper and more ominous the further you get in the game! Every time another object comes within scanner range, it's announced by a little fanfare from your tracking computer, and after level four or thereabouts these seem to come every couple of seconds as the aliens get really stroppy. The laser bolts (which are drawn in 3D as well) and the explosion sounds are both suitably



'spacey'. My advice is to plug your machine into a great big stereo and put the speakers either side of

your head.

**ACORN ACTION**

**VERDICT**

This is a stonker of a game, the best and most original shoot-em-up I've seen for a long while. It should carry a sticker: "Warning: horrendously addictive." Cancel all appointments for the next few weeks and go buy it.

**Best Feature:** Rather fruity 3D light-shaded graphics

**Worst Feature:** Can slow down a bit when there's lots going on



100%



### REMEMBER WHEN...

I'm just about old enough to remember when the likes of Asteroids and Space Invaders were considered to be the last word in video games. The fact that the basic concept still makes for a brilliant game over ten years later shows that some ideas are built to last. 2D Asteroids has made something of a comeback recently with Matt Black's Spheres of Chaos, which has even got the people at TV's Gamesmaster drooling. Basically asteroids are just hip and trendy at the moment. There are some similarities and a lot of differences between the 2D-based games and Magnetoids. In the old one, asteroids would pass through each other and enemy craft; in this one they still pass mysteriously through other asteroids, but smash into ships! I keep being reminded of the asteroid-field scene in The Empire Strikes Back when the fighter I'm just about to shoot is wiped out by a hunk of rock as big as Milton Keynes (and probably more fun to live in).

The game automatically compensates for the speed of the computer's processor, and there are also extra features for Risc PC owners (as if they weren't smug enough already!). Thoughtfully, everything is left perfectly intact when you return to the Desktop.

had a taste of your dogfighting skills. There are missiles, which you target and fire with the mouse, and a shield which consists of a cage of blue laser light that destroys anything it touches (while it lasts). The 'whirlwind' upgrade gives greater manoeuvrability, and there's a firepower boost

according to their different effects and disappear in a puff of pixels if you leave them floating about too long.

Each of the different fighters seems to have a different characteristic, though they've all got attitude problems. This stroppiness is quite understandable since you're busy blowing up their trading goods (the valuable magnetoids) to try to persuade them to leave your base alone. There are nippy little ones, sly ones who blast you from their tail if you don't weave out of their way and annoying little lime-green ones who seem to enjoy Mexican standoffs. The cheeky greenies will fly right up to you, look you in the eye and then zap you if you don't get them first. If you look really carefully, I swear you can see a pair of fluffy dice hanging inside one of them...

If you're after a completely original game that will keep you coming back for more long after the initial burst of excitement, then Magnetoids is for you. Just don't buy it if



you want to be able to pull yourself away from the computer for very long.



You can collect five different power-ups to add to your ship. These you salvage from the pods that are left behind by ships which have



which lets you blast the pants off everything with devastating salvos. Of course there's ya basic extra life too. The upgrades are colour-coded



#### Product:

Magnetoids

#### Requirements:

Archimedes with 1Mb RAM

£24.95 ex. VAT

#### Price:

Oregan Software Developments

36 Grosvenor Avenue, Streetly

Sutton Coldfield, B74 3PE

#### Supplier:

021 353 6044

#### Orderline:



# COMPETITION

Which is more exciting - the World Cup or the very first issue of Acorn Action? Well it has to be Acorn Action. At least with Acorn Action you can take part in our fantastic competition, and you've got a pretty good chance of winning some great prizes. What more could you want?

As everyone's going World Cup crazy at the moment, brutally torturing their minds by watching endless hours of World Cup qualifiers, matches, highlights, commentaries, etc., we have come up with a totally original concept for a competition for the first issue of Acorn Action. It is based on football. Brilliant, isn't it?

**Just look at these fantastic prizes that we are dying to give away.**

- An Acorn A3010 games computer complete with five fantastic games to start your games collection with a bang.
- Twenty runners-up prizes of one of the following games. You just tell us which one you want.

Millennium's  
Network 23's  
GamesWare's  
Renegades  
Fourth Dimension's

Diggers  
Warlocks  
James Pond 2+  
Sensible Soccer  
Birds of War

- Five exclusive, limited edition, highly desirable Acorn Action sweatshirts.

#### ENTERING THE COMPETITION

To enter the competition, you must be a subscriber to Acorn Action. If you ain't a subscriber, then you'd better hurry up and subscribe now, because you don't know what you'll be missing.

We don't want you to mutilate your very first issue of Acorn Action, so we've made it extra simple for all of you to enter the competition. Just photocopy the opposite page and complete the various sections.

#### RULES

- 1) The competition is only open to subscribers to Acorn Action Magazine. You must have a valid subscription number, and the name on the entry form must be the subscriber's name.
- 2) The closing date for the competition is 12pm on Tuesday 16th August. No entries will be accepted after this.
- 3) Any queries regarding the competition must be received within 28 days of the closing date.
- 4) Proof of postage will not be accepted as proof of delivery. Entries lost, delayed, illegible or insufficiently stamped will be declared void.
- 5) Open to UK residents only.
- 6) Employees of 32-bit Action, RISC Developments Ltd and Beebug, and their relatives and friends, are not eligible for entry.
- 7) The judges decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.
- 8) Entry into the competition means acceptance of the above rules and conditions.



# SPOT THE BALL

This is definitely spot the ball with a difference. We didn't take a photograph of a real football match and remove the ball. We took a snapshot of a real, live, computerised Speedball 2 football match and removed the ball. Now it's up to you to work out where the ball's supposed to be. Draw an X on the spot where you think the ball may have been. (We won't be amused if you draw the X with a 2" wide marker pen.)

## A QUESTION OF SPORT

Any avid footballer will be sure to know about every football game that's ever been released for the Archimedes.

Below are the names of four football games and four companies. Link with a line each game and the company that you think developed it.

Krisalis  
Fourth Dimension  
Gremlin Graphics  
Renegade

Premier Manager  
Sensible Soccer  
Manchester United  
Arcade Soccer

## ODD ONE OUT

A question for all the high-flyers out there. In each of the following four games, it's possible to launch oneself thousands of feet into the sky. In three of them however, high in the sky is where you're meant to be - circle the one where you're not.

Chocks Away      Stunt Racer 2000  
Interdictor      Birds of War

## THE ULTIMATE ACORN GAMES MAGAZINE?

We all think that Acorn Action is the ultimate Acorn games magazine, but then we would, wouldn't we. We want to know what you think of it. So tell us, in fifteen words or less, why you also think that Acorn Action is the ultimate Acorn games magazine. (We'll be devastated if you don't agree with us.)

Acorn Action is the ultimate Acorn games magazine because \_\_\_\_\_



To enter the competition, all you have to do is photocopy this page, complete the four sections and fill in the details. Then fold it up, stick it in an envelope and post it to this address:

Acorn Action Competition, Acorn Action  
117 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL3 4PU.

Your entry MUST reach us by midnight on Monday 15th August.

DON'T DELAY. POST IT TODAY!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (This must be the name in which the subscription was taken out.)

Subscription Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Work Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Which game would you like us to send you if you're one of the twenty lucky runners-up?

- a) Sensible Soccer
- b) James Pond 2+
- c) Warlocks
- d) Magic Pockets
- e) Diggers

**F**ast and furious, this latest development in football computer games could put a serious dent in your social life if you let it get too much of a grip.

The best football game yet has arrived for the Archimedes. Super-striker Rupert Hamer knocks a few beauties home to put Chinese Food 3-1 down; and reports on the match, the game and the copious post-match celebrations.

Imagine you are ploughing down the right wing. Pele is on your left, you cut in, slip it past a defender and curve one into the back of the net. The crowd go wild and Pele personally slaps you on the back and says he couldn't have done it better himself. Well, that's Sensible Soccer.

Combining sampled sound effects of real footballers playing and the atmospheric chants of a sizeable home crowd, Sensible Soccer transports you from a dismal wet Sunday afternoon to a packed stadium and a vital crunch match for your favourite side.

Only this time you don't get wet, you don't aggravate that nagging back problem and you don't miss the last bus home and the final scores.

But the real beauty of this game is that it lets you play for yourself the kind of soccer that is a real joy to watch - short quick passes, breaks down

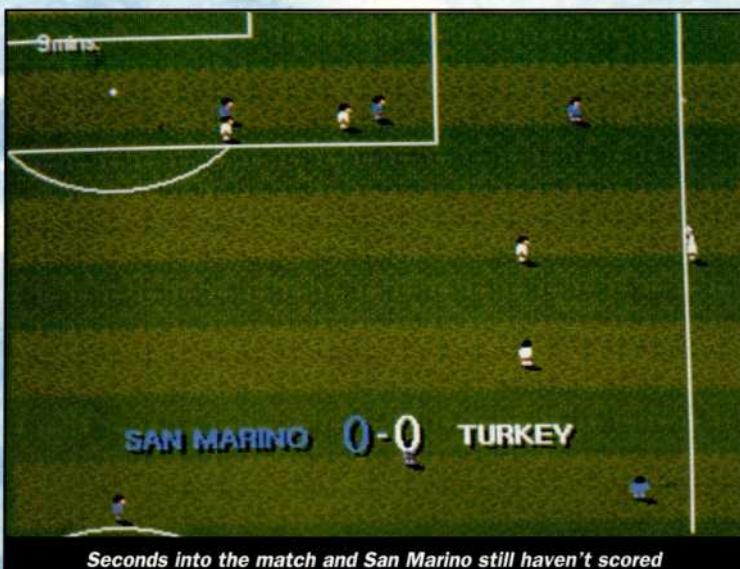
the wing, elaborate dodging and weaving.

## NO WAY REFEREE!

Unfortunately, there is no actual referee to blame your defeats on, or just generally abuse under your breath, only an 'invisible' ref who invariably gives the opposition ludicrous decisions like penalties ('I was nowhere near him!')

that lovely solid thud when you belt one up the pitch for the lads to follow. The game can be so quick that you can lose yourself in the pace and with a quick few passes your opponent can be hurtling towards your goal and a humiliating 4-0 victory, so you have to keep your wits about you.

Sensible Soccer can involve any number of people. For pure self-indulgence you can sit and play the computer, which



Seconds into the match and San Marino still haven't scored

But there is plenty of scope to exercise your skill as an armchair sportsman.

There is even a facility which enables you to majestically curve the ball left or right for that final display of panache before the ball glides into the net. And then you can see it all again on instant slow-motion replay or, after the match, re-live those wonderful, pulse-quicken moments with a special edition of highlights, saved automatically for your pleasure.

The ball even bounces realistically and there is

is very hard at first and there is no difficulty-control that can be adjusted. Or you can turn it into a truly sociable sporting event and invite 20 of your mates round to play in a grand cup knock-out tournament, with extra time and penalty shoot outs.

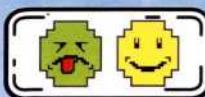
## LEAGUE DIVISION SAD

Alternatively you can formulate your own football league for those great family competitions. And, of course, you miss out on any potential football

hooligan violence, unless you come from a particularly competitive and volatile family, who take a late equalizer in the 89th minute as a personal insult.

The game gives you ample opportunity to choose which side you want to be. Predictably you can opt to play Chelsea in the 1994 FA Cup Final or for fun you can choose to be Dead Rockstars and let Hendrix put you ahead in the 9th minute, while Lennon blasts another home in the 83rd. Or you can be Chinese Food and get a stunning win with a hat trick by Special Fried Rice - but only if you have a particularly badly developed sense of humour. It also lets you select the kind of style you want to play: attack, defensive or a variety of formulations like 4-4-2. If you find yourself ahead and want to be very safe and boring you can always switch to a defensive formation in the middle of the match. And you can decide what kind of weather conditions to play in. A lovely mid-summer's afternoon in Madrid, or a dull winter game in Scunthorpe, or even, perhaps, an icy afternoon playing Leeds Utd away.

Perhaps the hardest part of the game is learning to dribble effectively. The computer seems to be able to do this no problem which makes it a challenge to beat. But don't lose heart. At worst you can comfort yourself that it is only a dumb machine and you are



a warm, vital, passionate human being - albeit one who enjoys spending all afternoon indoors with a computer.

One slight difficulty is that sometimes the game moves so quickly that you lose track of who has the ball and before you know it the crowd is roaring its delight as you go 1-0 down. Ironically, it also seems impossible to score from the penalty spot (just like Chris Waddle!). Try curving to the left and the keeper is there. Try the right and it's the same story.

## THAT WAS NEVER 90 MINUTES

The matches are also a bit short for my liking. Just as you are beginning to break down your opponent's defences, the whistle has gone and it is off to the changing room for a hot shower and a leisurely look at the highlights. It is possible to alter the match length, but only to a maximum of 10 minutes.

The authentic sound effects make playing an absolute delight, especially through headphones or a hi-fi. When your centre forward skims the post with a long drive the crowd dutifully gives a excited 'Ooooooh!' and when your

opponent's keeper makes a difficult save they give you a rewarding 'Aaaarrr!'. And of course when you manage to score they cheer you all the way back to your half.

The game enables you to indulge in almost every facet of football. You can try taking the ball into the penalty area and hope you are brought down. There are free kicks for fouls,

but be careful you don't get a yellow card! And there are realistic throw-ins and corners.

It is this variety and realism, plus the way you can improve your skill with each game, that may eventually threaten your marriage and/or concentration at work or school.



*A perfect example of considerate defensive play in the style of Graham Taylor*

### TOUGH TACTICS GUIDE TO SUCCESS

An important feature of this remarkable game is tactics. Those team pep-talks, the shouting of instructions from the keyboard lines, the furious ranting. It is, of course, all totally worthless because no one will be able to hear you apart from a few irate neighbours. However, there are a few handy hints that perhaps I can pass on.

1. **Don't go for the penalty by running blindly into the area in the hope that someone brings you down. It never happens and even if you do get fouled it is almost impossible to score from the penalty spot.**
2. **A lot of curve is your best chance of reaching football heaven.**
3. **Don't slide tackle unless you are feeling particularly nasty. An off-the-ball incident is a yellow card offence and dirty tackles inside the goal area will almost certainly see you heading off for an early shower.**
4. **Do pass quickly and shoot at the first opportunity.**
5. **Do get back and tackle. It is surprisingly effective and (I think) damages your opponent psychologically.**
6. **Do celebrate a 4-3 victory with wild hoots of delight and copious amounts of opponent taunting.**

## GOOOOOAAAALLL BRAZIL!!!!

But perhaps the best part is scoring a particularly stunning goal and then watching your friend's face as you view it again and again with the slow motion replay until he finally cracks and clobbers you over the head.

Eventually you will probably end up producing your 'finest ever moments in Sensible Soccer' in a special edition of highlights - a process guaranteed to make your mates think twice before dropping round your place of an evening.

I can't recommend Sensible Soccer highly enough. What a score! And with the next World Cup a whole four years away, it's the only way you're going to see class international football action without worrying about the severe talent bypass currently affecting the bulk of the current England team.



Sensible Soccer is fast, exciting and utterly convincing with its graphics and sound effects. A brilliant afternoon's sport!

**92%**

**Best Feature:** The slow motion action replays.

**Worst Feature:** The shortness of the games.

**Product:** Sensible Soccer

**Minimum requirements:** Archimedes with 1Mb RAM

**Supplier:** Renegade

Unit C1, Metropolitan Wharf

Wapping Wall, London E1 9SS

**Orderline:** 071 481 1037

**Price:** £29.95 ex VAT

# REVIEWS

## PREMIER MANAGER

**E**ver wondered why our boys aren't in America right now? Rob Miller stepped into the manager's shoes for a season to find out, and he discovered a simple reason why England never made the World Cup. Some readers may find his report disturbing.



During my first season as manager I took my team to the top of the league and won nearly every cup going - with my eyes shut. Beat that Graham! Not bad, I thought, for a first attempt. However I must confess, for Mr Taylor's benefit, that I did what some cynics (notably non-Tottenham fans) allege is done and cheat, cheat, cheat.

This is because I got bored, bored, bored playing Premier Manager properly. There is no doubt that as a football management game it

is bound to be a little esoteric, but I am sure that a man like myself who is reasonably into football could have more fun than this.

Acorn players are getting a lot of football games at the

## PREMIER MANAGER

### How not to get to the World Cup in twenty easy steps.

somewhere and my first step up the ladder of football success was managing Wycombe Wanderers - a little known team of supposedly championship potential.

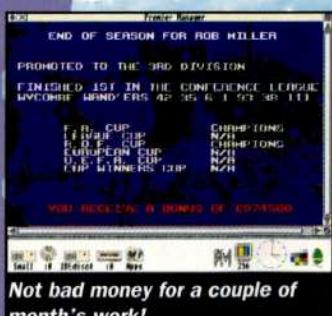
At the beginning of the first season, you get allocated your team, plus a pile of money in the bank with which to trade players, improve your ground and generally keep the team on its feet. Balancing the books is almost as important as winning the matches and so you have to make sure that ticket sales are kept high by keeping the ground in shape.

With Premier Manager, you can now re-live (or even create) great moments in sporting history. How did Graham Taylor feel when England actually managed to win a game? Can Mr Venables get his team back into shape ready for the 1998 World Cup? All these questions and more can be answered from the comfort of your own living room.

Well, that's the theory anyway. Before you get too big for your boots, there is the small matter of getting your

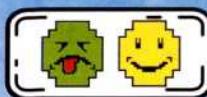


team promoted from the Conference League to the Premier League. All great things must start from



Other cash sources include TV coverage fees for important matches (rarely the ones you seem to play in), plus the occasional investment from a grumbling director. Successful games make for happy management, and the more you win the more money they plough into the team.

If one of your team does especially well, you might even find another team putting in a bid for him and it's up to you whether you sell to make more money or keep the player to improve your chances of winning further matches. Some players can demand pretty high fees and



occasionally two for the price of one is the better option.

Once you're happy with your team, you can actually play (or more correctly, sit back and watch) a match proper. Games consist of two halves, just like an actual game of football and a continuous commentary is supplied throughout. The position of the ball on the pitch is shown on a small 'slider' which goes from left to right - with your team on one end and your opponents on the other.

Playing Premier Manager consists largely in viewing long lists of player names and match results. In fact the only thing you could properly call action is a tiny,



animated display during matches that pathetically shows who is in possession of the ball, plus attempts at goal and any intervention by the referee in the case of a dispute. Each game can be played in real-time, in other words games (seem to) take 45 minutes per half

(yawn....!), or speeded up



Premier Manager tries hard to mirror the 'real world' of football management

Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be that exciting. Give me a green field, 22 good men, four sticks and an inflated cow's bladder any day!

**Best Feature:** Save Game feature guarantees the top position in the league.

**Worst Feature:** 'Watching' matches is about as exciting as simultaneously watching grass grow and paint dry.

# 58%

Premier Manager tries hard to mirror the 'real world' of football management

Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be that exciting. Give me a green field, 22 good men, four sticks and an inflated cow's bladder any day!

**Best Feature:** Save Game feature guarantees the top position in the league.

**Worst Feature:** 'Watching' matches is about as exciting as simultaneously watching grass grow and paint dry.

so a full game only takes a couple of minutes. Even this is too long.

With an average of 40 games per season you have to be particularly patient, especially when you're playing with a bunch of friends. The ultimate aim of Premier Manager is to get your team to the top of the



Premier Division and you certainly won't do this in one sitting. A nice feature of the game is the fact that it runs happily in Desktop window, so you can get on with other things while you play. If you prefer, the game can also be switched into full screen mode for that extra-special feeling of 'being there' (in the manager's dreary office, that is).

If some smart alec relative ever consoled you with "It's not the winning that counts but taking part" - and if you believed them - then you might just make it through four seasons.

Anyone who moaned at Graham Taylor when England's World Cup dreams were smashed should put their money where their

mouth is, buy Premier Manager and see what life is like in the 'real' world of football. You'll probably find out why we bombed out of the World Cup. Managing is so boring Taylor probably fell asleep.

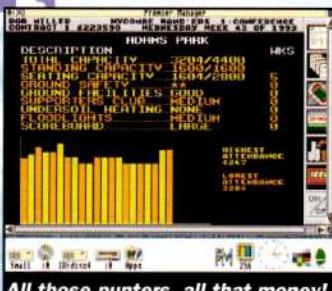
## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WINNING

The best and by far the most simple way of guaranteeing your position at the top of the league is to cheat. No one wants to admit to being beaten by the computer, especially when the victors are a bunch of part-time, Sunday enthusiasts (ring any bells Mr Taylor?).

Because seasons can take a long time, Gremlin has included a very useful save game feature in Premier Manager, that allows you to save your position whenever you like. It doesn't take long to realise that the best time to save your position is before a match. Any hiccups (such as, say, the other team

## FOUR PLAY (AT ONCE!)

What could be better than inviting your friends round for the afternoon and sitting back, can in hand, to



watch your favourite team? Well, how about inviting your friends round, giving them each a football team to manage and then spending the rest of the time screaming and shouting at each other?

Buying and selling becomes a more integral part of the game and it's great fun pinching players from under your friend's nose. You can also gang up, apply the special 'winning tactic' (see other box) and make sure that it's your teams that fight it out in the semi-finals.



winning) can then be back-stepped by reloading the pre-match position.

Using this rather cunning 'tactic', you can keep playing a match until you get a decent result. Who knows, you might even win the FA Cup. Oh yeah, I forgot, I did win the FA Cup, and the ROF Cup, and managed first position in the division all season!

### Product

Premier Manager

### Price

£25.99 ex. VAT

### Supplier

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd

Carver House

2-4 Carver Street

Sheffield S1 4FS

### Orderline

0742 753423

**Minimum requirements:** Archimedes with 1Mb RAM

# BEST OF THE REST

**W**hat is The Best of the Rest all about? It's very simple really. With all the new games companies entering the Acorn market, the number of games that could be converted to Acorn computers is growing all the time.

Companies like U.S.Gold, Millennium and Renegade have huge catalogues of games, many of which have been hits on all the other computers for which they were released. Hot titles from these companies include Zool 2, Another World, Brutal Sports Football and Street Fighter II. But the companies don't know what games you would like to see converted to the Acorn, and more importantly, which games you would definitely buy if they were converted.

So every issue in The Best of the Rest, we're going to take a couple of games from these companies and tell you all about them. We're not going to review or rate the games in this section though - if a game gets into The Best of the Rest, you can assume that it is an absolute stunner. So that you can get a feel for each game, we'll tell you the story behind it, just as you'd read it in the manual, what the gameplay involves - is it a platform, strategy, adventure or whatever, and how long we think the game would keep your attention - is it the type of game you would put on the shelf and forget about, or would you come back to it again and again.

This issue in The Best of the Rest, we look at two games from Millennium, the company that has already brought us Diggers. Not everyone at Acorn Action thought that Diggers was as great as it was made out to be. Some found it very enjoyable, but others complained that it was incredibly boring to play. All of us agree, however, that Millennium should have converted Morph to the Acorn before Diggers. Global Effect, another hit game from Millennium, is a huge strategy game, similar in concept to Sim City, but much more advanced and detailed. It's been raved about on other platforms, but do you want it?

## MORPH - THE STORY

When Morris Rolph - Morph to his friends - called round to see his uncle, the eccentric Professor Krakenpot, he was

surprised to see how excited he looked. "Come in my boy, come. It's finished at last!" he said, ushering him in from the gathering storm. As Morph followed him into his laboratory he wondered if it could really be true, that after months of hard work the professor had finally succeeded in building a teleport machine.

"Watch this!" the professor said, putting Eric the white mouse onto one of the two metal platforms at either end of the enormous room. Morph's eyes opened wide as the professor parted some curtains revealing a wall full of cogs and gears that were attached to a massive machine.

The professor pulled a metal lever on the wall, and the machine whirred



into life. Eric disappeared with a squeak into a haze of sparkling stars and the machine fell silent.

Morph held his breath - would everything work alright? He hoped Eric would be safe! The professor looked around with a triumphant gleam in his eye as he pulled the second lever and the machine gave a cough, spluttered, and the sparks began to form on the platform at the other end of the room. Morph breathed a huge sigh of relief as the brave little mouse snapped back into reality, twitching its little nose in the air defiantly. "You did it!" he gasped in amazement. As Eric scampered around the laboratory, Morph's mind raced. Just think of the fun he could have with this machine! He could get into football matches free, get out of school quickly and as for practical jokes, the teleport machine was

brilliant. "Can I have a go now?" he

yelled, jumping onto the platform.

Professor Krakenpot shook his head. "I'm sorry Morris," he said. "It might not be safe. I haven't tested it on humans yet, only Eric... Now where is that creature?"

Just then the professor caught sight of the mouse. He was about to jump off the top of the machine - onto the first metal lever. "Nooo," the professor yelled, but it was too late! The white mouse leapt onto the lever which slowly sank down. Once more the machine clunked into action and Morph vanished into the swirling stars. The room fell silent once more save for the lashing of the rain against the window panes.

The professor stood frozen to the spot in horror until he was roused by a loud clap of thunder that shook the house to its foundations. "I must get Morris back," he thought, dashing across the room to the second lever. He was just tightening his grip on it

Troy Hamilton wants to know what games you want to see on your Acorn computer.

when a bolt of lightning ripped through the sky, tore through the roof and smashed into the machine! The force of the bolt sent sparks flying through the air and the machine exploded, scattering its components around the surrounding countryside. Aghast, the professor cried out, "Morph, are you alright? Did I pull the lever in time?" As the room cleared the professor saw a cloud of twinkling atoms and electrons - all that remained of Morph!

"Don't worry. I'm here and I'm feeling fine." It was Morph. "I'm in a sort of state of limbo," he explained. "I can't regain my body but I can pull my molecules closer together and change my shape. I'll go and find the parts while you check the rest of the machine. Once I've collected the missing pieces you can repair the machine and bring me back."

## THE GAME

The objective of the game is for Morph to re-assemble the teleport machine enabling him to return to the form of a small boy. To achieve this, he has to collect all the machine's pieces, in the form of cogs, which have been scattered over 36 dastardly levels.

Morph may no longer be a normal boy, but there are advantages in being a collection of disembodied atoms. He can metamorphose at will from one state of matter to another, and each of the four states he can assume has its own advantages and disadvantages. In a gaseous state, Morph can float around and pass through small holes and grilles. He'd better watch out for extraction fans however. As a liquid, Morph can seep through holes, extinguish fires and squeeze around the sides of lifts. He



can also be unpleasantly dissolved by other liquids, and drains can be a nasty obstacle. In his flexible state, Morph is rubbery and bouncy just like a beach ball - very useful for negotiating high walls, big holes and watery obstacles, but not that useful when it comes to sharp, pointy things. As solid matter, Morph is like a cannonball, and walls don't stand a chance against him. But then neither do certain sections of the floor on which he's travelling.

#### WHAT DO WE THINK?

We're mad about Morph. It's fun to play, addictive, has great colourful graphics and sound effects, and all the necessary elements to make a perfect platform puzzler. Morph will keep you hooked until you've completed it, and you'll come back to it afterwards just for the fun of it.

#### GLOBAL EFFECT - THE STORY

You are now the leader of a new government in the future, far in advance of any today. Your assignment is to guide settlements through the early stages of growth, into booming civilisations with thriving environments. You are the central power point and controller of the world and you give all the commands.

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The whole purpose of this section is to enable us to tell the games companies which games you would like to see converted. If you don't write in and tell us, then we're not going to be able to tell them very much. Just imagine how sad it would be if we had to give U.S. Gold the news that only 1 Acorn games player wanted Street Fighter 2 converted.

To let us know which game (or games) from the above you

*Where previous leaders have failed, your task will be to try to repair damage they might have caused, and create a new, cleaner world. A fully balanced Eco System has to be perfectly balanced in order to survive the ages, and yours will be no different. Not only will you have to deal with the economic problems of constructing and managing cities, and the potential of crippling wars with other governments, but you will also have to take responsibility for your actions and their effects. Global warming, post-nuclear devastation, encroaching desert, deforestation, growing polar caps, population explosions and pollution poisoning are just some of the devastating global effects that your planet may encounter.*

*Do you have what it takes to deal with hazardous man-made or natural disasters? Can you win your people's confidence, and maintain the flora and fauna in a well balanced environment? Take the challenge, you could make a memorable and powerful leader.*

#### THE GAME

The aim of Global Effect is to build a thriving colony whilst keeping the environment in balance. You will start out with limited economic power which will need to be wielded carefully

and wisely.

Every action you perform, such as building a city block or constructing an oil refinery reduces your power level. Every game year, the state of your environment and the economy are assessed, and you are either awarded additional power to use, or have some deducted for bad management.

This is an environmentally friendly game, and you succeed by keeping the world balanced for as long as possible. If you can manage one world well, there are a number of other planets throughout the universe needing your wisdom.

Global Effect is

divided into several sections and scenarios. When you start a new game, you choose from one of three options. In Create a World, which gives you the chance to design the type of game that you want to play, you can either select one of eight fixed environmental scenarios or start from scratch with a virgin planet. The Save the World option provides you with four planets with major environmental problems, and it's your job to repair them in a set period of time and with limited power. Selecting the Rule the World option sends you on a mission to destroy the occupier of another world, either economically or with force, and

then repair the environmental mess that you've made in the process.

Gameplay itself is divided into three elements - controlling the environment, building a thriving civilisation, and implementing aggressive and defensive military structures to protect and expand your environment and civilisation. Decisions made at the beginning of a game relating to any of these elements may not have any visible or serious effect until 15 games years down the line, so planning and strategy are paramount.

During the game, you'll have to worry about things such as what trees to plant to prevent global warming or cooling; whether to use coal, oil or nuclear power - you may have to construct oil rigs and pipelines, or perform seismic surveys to find a good source of uranium; organising your cities so that they can grow, but still provide them with national parks, green belts, and services; and whether or not you really want to use nuclear power and get involved in a power struggle with an unfriendly planet.

#### WHAT DO WE THINK?

Global Effect is absolutely massive, and has enough to keep you engrossed for months and months. If you're a Populus, Powermonger, SimCity, power-mad megalomaniac, Global Effect is just the thing for you.

want converted, and would purchase, write the name of the game(s), and how much you would be prepared to pay for them, on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and send to:

The Best of the Rest, Acorn Action  
117 Hatfield Road, St Albans  
Herts AL1 4JS

You can also fax us your choices on 0727 860263. Just make sure that 'The Best of the Rest' is clearly visible on the fax.





the start of the level. One of the sets, containing a watering can and a racket, can be used to obtain POWER; another, with the violin and snowman, will give you infinite LIVES; while the third is identical to the tower CHEAT.

The other entertaining exercise for you and James is to take a ride on the train. Climb the very last tower on the main screen, jump onto the roof on your left, and run left into the wall. Better keep on your toes for this section as a slip could be quite unpleasant.



#### THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE GAMES

You don't really want to know what my favourite games are? You do? I'm touched, all chocked up

that you care so much,

that you want me to share my wisdom with you.

Well here they are then.

Dr Phipps' Top Ten

(recent) games.

Bringing up the tail at

number ten is

Oregan's Quark.

Far better than

Xenon 2,



Quark is fast and furious, and the best vertically-scrolling blaster on the Arc. At number nine is

Sherston's Crystal Maze, a feast of puzzles and hair-tearing. Krisalis Software's Lemmings 2 drops in at eight, although I don't think it's got the same frustration level, and thus addictiveness of Lemmings 1. Haunted House, the finest example of its genre on the Archimedes, plonks

itself in the table at seven. It had better watch out, however, because Simon the Sorcerer is coming. At number six is one of the finest games ever written for the Arc - TBA's Axis - the tank game with a difference. Number five is Phaethon from System Interrupt. Incredibly addictive! Number four - Millennium's Diggers, which is even more addictive than Phaethon. Krisalis Software's Speedball 2 at position three has to be the best conversion ever released on the Arc. Quite superb! In second place is Network 23's Warlocks. A great game



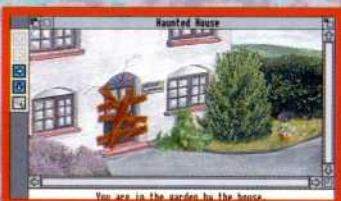
that doesn't get 100% because it crashes on my system when I reach the volcano. Gatecrashing in at number one is the one and only



Hamsters. Listen very carefully now. Go out and buy the Aries collection from GamesWare immediately. Your life is not complete without Hamsters, the highlight of this excellent games compendium.

#### A RIGHT ROYAL SOLUTION - HAUNTED HOUSE

I hear from my good friend Larry that some of you found my cellar hint in the guide just a little obscure. Well Larry's provided the non-obscure version of this hint in his page, so here is another bit of



advice for this seriously difficult game. How to get the queen off the throne in the back yard. Simple really. Collect all the bottles from the garden shed, line them up in front of the throne room, and play God Save the Queen on them. She'll take a bow and vanish in a puff of smoke, leaving you to enjoy the pleasures to be found in the throne room. Haunted House, what a hint!



#### HINTS TO CUT OUT AND STICK ON YOUR MONITOR

To have a more enjoyable journey in that classic shoot 'em up, SWIV, pause the game, type in the word NIGEL and press Return. The border should flash blue, and voila - infinite lives. You can remove the cheat by repeating this procedure.



Two cheat modes exist to help you help the prehistoric lager lout, Chuck Rock, find his beautiful wife Ophelia. While at the title screen, enter the word PINKYANDPERKY to enable Chuck to fly the entire game. During the actual game, simply press 'F' to take off. ERMINTRUDE, also entered at the title screen, will provide Chuck with that wonderful attribute of invulnerability, so long as he doesn't spend too much time under water.

The prize for the 'most difficult to remember' cheat must definitely go to James Pond 1. To make James invulnerable, and also to enable him to jump straight to any level, pause the game and type the following: YNGWIE J MALMSTEEN. The words 'Cheat Mode On' will now appear on the screen, and pressing the mission number will take you directly to that level.

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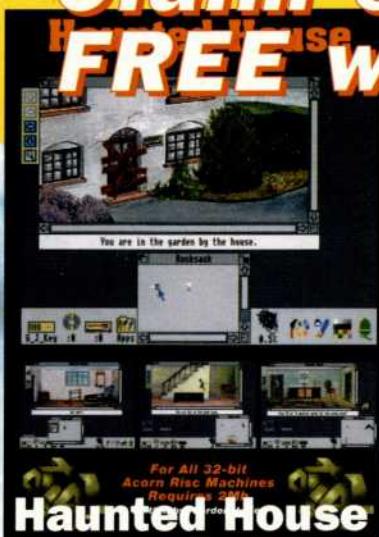
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**Haunted House**

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One of the Fourth Dimension's most popular games, Haunted House is guaranteed to drive you crazy with its twisted and convoluted puzzles. It's all too easy to get into the cellar, but will you be able to find the way out?

## XENON 2

WITH A SOUNDTRACK BY BOMB THE BASS

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# LARRY'S LETTERS

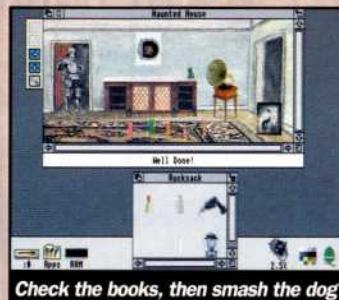


## SAVE MY SANITY FROM HOUSE OF HORRORS

Dear Larry

Can you help me with Haunted House? I got the game at Christmas and it took me weeks to get through the front door. Unfortunately I am now stuck in the entrance room. I cannot get the code for the safe. I have tried using the book page numbers but with no luck. I would be grateful if you could save my sanity and let me know the combination!

**Mrs C Whitehead, Northwich, Cheshire.**



*Check the books, then smash the dog*

from the left and noting down the page numbers. Then grab the little yapping dog (by turning on His Master's Voice), smash him open and examine the contents. That is the number you must add to each page number before using the sequence as the combination. Incidentally, did

you know that the ghost in the hallway is afraid of bells, bibles and candles?

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE GREAT GAMES GONE?

Dear Larry

Why are all the best games on other computers? My friend has a PC and is always getting great new games. For starters not as many games come out on the Archimedes and then, even when the good ones do finally make it to our format, they are about two years out of



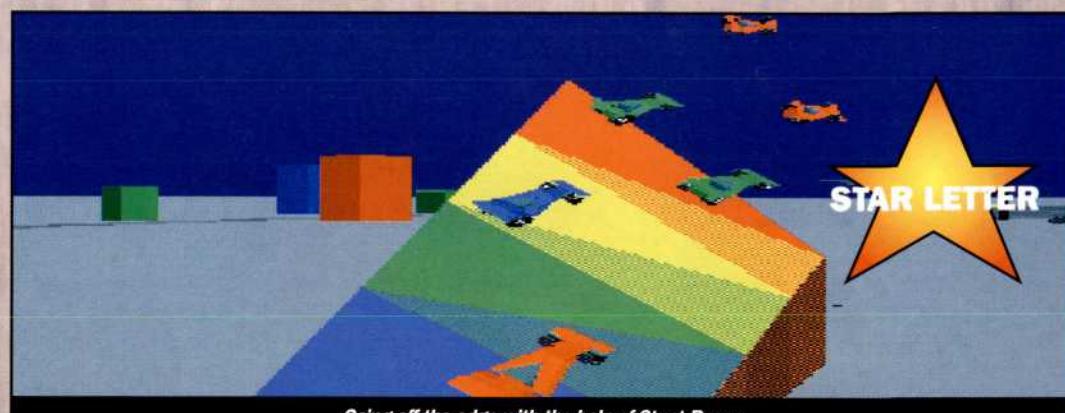
*How about this for a game then?*

date. Surely the Acorn market is big enough by now for the big companies to write games to be compatible with the Archimedes?

**Paul Wright, Guildford, Surrey.**

**A** year ago I would have hung my head in shame and let my shaggy

*Continues on page 51*



*Going off the edge with the help of Stunt Racer*

**STAR LETTER**

## SHORT CHEAT CHEATED BY STUNT RACER

Dear Larry

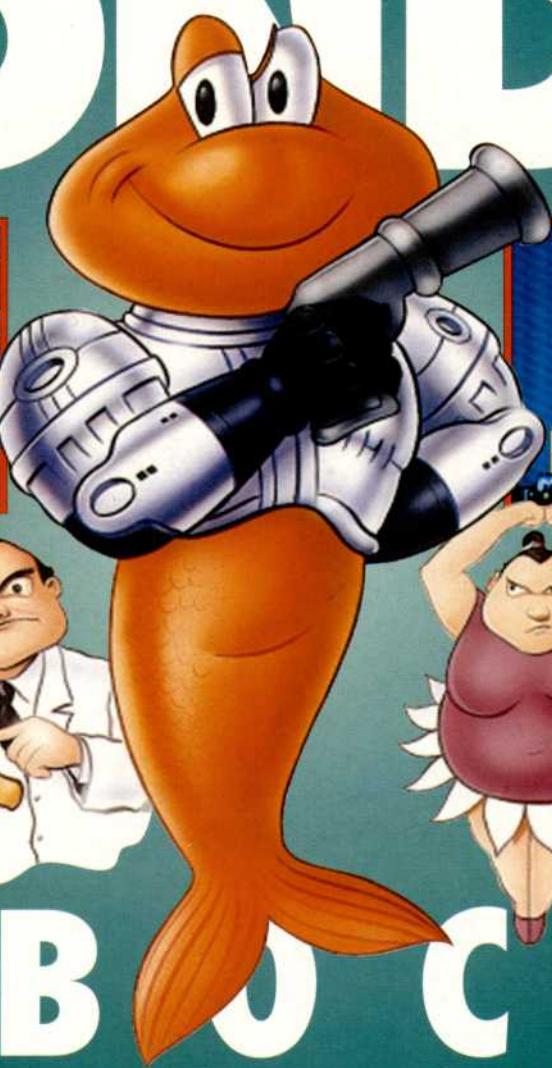
Much as I admire you as a lemming I cannot believe you will be able to help me. I am having difficulty with Stunt Racer 2000 and since you need to be reasonably tall to reach the pedals of a racing car you won't have had any experience with the game. The problem is that whenever I win a race on the third track it says I have failed and places me fourth, but I have managed to come second and third on several occasions and have the race recording to prove it. Why am I being cheated in this way? Is it because I bought masonic help and sabotage?

**Julie King Sudbury, Suffolk.**

**A**ctually, I am a great fan of Stunt Racer 2000 and a particularly hot driver, if I may say so. As you know, we lemmings stick together at all times and I drive with the help of my friends. Lauren and Lee operate the pedals while I stand on Louise to steer. Stunt Racer is right up our street because we love to kill ourselves in horrible ways. Anyway, your problem. It is likely that you have an early version of the game because the first batch contained a bug that showed up when you use sabotage. Forking out for sabotage means one of the cars will explode sometime during the race. The bug is that the game still thinks that the exploded car is racing. Understandably, trying to keep track of a car that doesn't exist any more can be quite confusing, even for a smart computer, so it blames the whole cobble on you and places you fourth. Serves you right for cheating I suppose. To remedy the situation, send your original discs back to The Fourth Dimension with a little note explaining the problem and within no time at all they will send you an updated, cheatable, version of Stunt Racer 2000. Happy crashing!

# JAMES POND 2

NEW  
LEVELS  
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MUSIC



2



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# LARRY'S LETTERS



## From page 49

green hair flop down all over my face. In fact, your remarks would have hit such a raw nerve I might even have been tempted to leap from the nearest rocky cliff. But now everything is different and I leap from rocky cliffs with glee, not shame. Although the Archimedes does not get all the games that appear on the PC, we get the best. The Archimedes gets the pick of the crop. In the last few months we have seen many top

games released on Acorn format - Speedball 2, Sensible Soccer, Flashback, Premier Manager, Diggers, James Pond 2+, Scrabble - as well as several Arc-only games. Not forgetting Simon the Sorcerer of course. The gap is closing as more big companies come into the market. And as soon as some come in, the rest follow. Have a look at the US Gold profile to see how one of the world's biggest games houses is making moves on Acorn. And then hang your head in shame for suggesting the Archimedes is not a capable games machine. But don't try the green hair trick or jumping off cliffs unless you're a lemming.

## THE WRONG WAY ROUND

Dear Larry,

Why do I always feel tired during the day when I've been getting plenty of uninterrupted sleep but wide awake if I've been going to bed late and getting up early? It seems to be the wrong way round.

**Sarah Kattau, Royston, Cambridgeshire**

**Y**eeeeesss...

## MORE HAUNTED HOUSE HORRORS

Dear Larry

Could you please tell me how to get out of the cellar in



Or what about James Pond II

Haunted House. I read Dr Phipps' hint in the games guide, but I am still totally lost. There just doesn't seem

to be any way out of the cellar.

**Phillip King, St Albans, Herts.**

**Y**ou know something, I shouldn't actually be giving all these hints and tips in the letters page - it really is Dr Phipps' territory - but since this is the very first letters page and Dr Phipps has loads of hints and tips, I'll help you out in this case. The Haunted House Cellar Problem - this one even had Dr Phipps in trouble, until he phoned up the Fourth Dimension for advice.

As Dr Phipps said in the games guide, the answer lies in the notebook beside the telephone. If you examine the notebook, you will find two telephone numbers - 448 5848 and 849 9959. The digits in each number are the number of characters in the words 'Left' (4), 'Right' (5), 'Forwards' (8) and 'Backwards' (9). The first telephone number gives the directions to a secret room, so to get there go: left, left, forwards, right, forwards, left, forwards. The second number

takes you right out of the cellar: forwards, left, backwards, backwards, backwards, right, backwards.

Dr Phipps has mentioned to me that he would like to give the complete solution to Haunted House in his advice column in the next issue. He's got a minor problem however - he hasn't managed to complete the game himself yet! So if anyone out there has finished this intriguing game, let him know. He might even send the first person to respond a copy of Sensible Soccer, Diggers, or whatever else he has up his sleeve.

## A PRESSING PROBLEM

Dear Larry

I've just bought Speedball 2 from Krisalis and having played it for two whole days (and two entire nights as well) I think I'm totally addicted to it. It's one of the best

games I've ever seen on the Archimedes. Unfortunately, it has the same irritating problem that all Krisalis games have. Although it is very easy to redefine the keys, you cannot save the new key settings, so every time you load the game you have to

redefine them again. Why don't games companies put a 'Save settings' option into their games?

**Paul Johnson**

**H**mmm... With regards to your possible Speedball 2 addiction, I strongly recommend that you write to our resident psychoanalyst, Dr Phipps. He has spent many years studying the effects of continual exposure to computer games, bravely using himself as the guinea pig in all his experiments. In order to protect us from potential hazards, so he claims, any new game that arrives for review is quarantined in his office, with him, for at least seven days. The man is a hero!

Yup, Speedball 2 does have the same irritating problem that all other

**Krisalis**

games have - but then at least it DOES allow you to redefine the keys in the first place. Just think how many

games there are that don't. Never fear however. All of us lemmings agree with you totally that games should allow you to save the settings, and we're going to go on a Lemming mission to persuade companies to build it into their games.



More addictive Speedball terror

## Write to Larry the Lemming at:

**Acorn Action,  
117 Hatfield Road,  
St Albans,  
Herts AL1 4JS**

# COOL GADGETS

**WARNING  
DANGER**  
You are now entering the Cool Gadgets Zone. Cool Gadgets carries a health warning: Reading this section may seriously damage your ego, morale, confidence and bank balance. Read at your own peril!

**S**o you think you're cool with your shades, leather jacket, Harley and Super NES? Not a chance mate, not a chance! You're about as cool as a pint of bitter. There is only one route to true coolness this summer, and that's through Acorn Action and Cool Gadgets, the page where anything that's got cool-potential gets a mention.

Three important steps to take on the path to ultra-coolness:

Step 1: Be seen with *Acorn Action* wherever you go. Display the stunning cover in a prominent position on your body so that potential admirers cannot fail to notice you.

Step 2: Read Cool Gadgets - the page for the ultra-cool. Admirers will immediately realise that since you are reading the page for the ultra-cool, you must therefore be ultra-cool. Logical, isn't it!

Step 3: make sure you only purchase cool things for you and your computer over the summer.

It's that time of the year again: the computer mating

season. Computers all around the country are working out in the gym every day to improve their physical and mental attributes. They're trying to go faster, look better and remember more. As a computer owner, it's your responsibility to aid your computer in this never-ending quest. Your computer wants nothing more than to be bigger and better than the one next door. Otherwise it has to live with the constant fear that you might find the neighbour more attractive than it. What can you do to make it happy?

Here are this summer's Cool Gadgets' ultra-cool items for you and your computer.



## The Pocket Book

Oozing street cred from all its pores, Acorn's Pocket Book is a totally cool item at a totally cool price. It is also the perfect personal organiser. Banish from your life those desperate moments when a potential date is about to give you THE telephone number and every writing instrument in a thousand yard radius vanishes in a puff of smoke. The Pocket Book is the "little black book" of the 90's. With it nesting in your pocket you'll never be lost for a conversation topic at a party. You'll have learned from it that Ouagadougou is in Burkina Faso, but how many other people will know this fascinating piece of information? Just in case you're wondering whether it's got any "fun" uses in addition to these highly practical ones, it comes complete with a word processor, spreadsheet, database and spelling checker, and is as rugged as a Canadian lumberjack. The only time it's not cool to be seen with a Pocket Book is when the person next to you pulls out a Psion 3A. In this situation we advise that you retaliate immediately with an Apple Newton. Priced at £169.95 ex. VAT, the Pocket Book won't break your bank balance. Contact Acorn on 0223 254254.

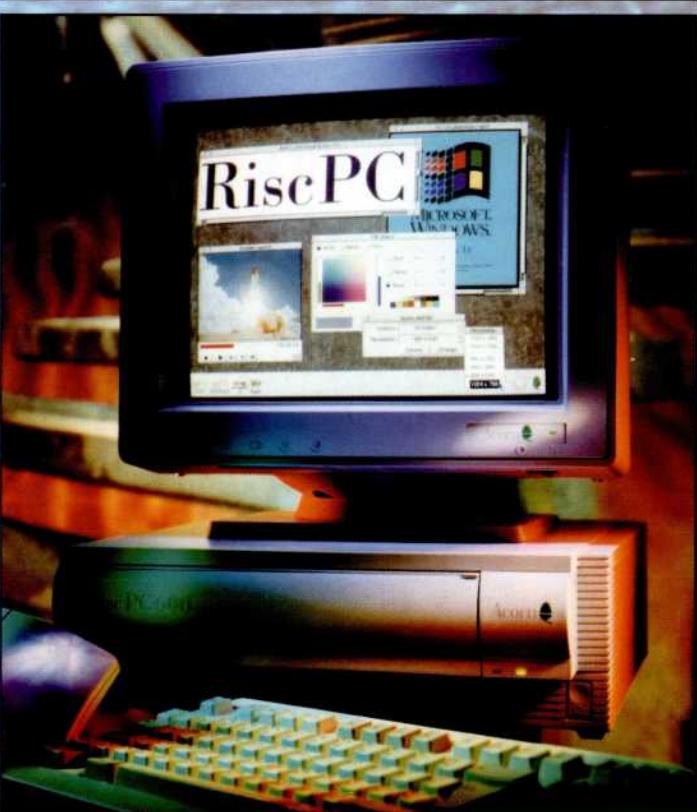


## The Pioneer DRM-604X

Weighing in at £999 ex. VAT, the Pioneer DRM-604X is the CD-ROM drive system for the Acorn user who's got too much free space on the icon bar. It's a six-disc, quad-speed, PhotoCD multi-session compatible hunk of a CD-ROM drive. It would be cruel and untrue to say that it can therefore hold every CD available for the Arc at the same time. If you're a cheapskate, you can always go for the DRM-604X's little brother, the Pioneer DRM-602X six-disc, double-speed, PhotoCD multi-session compatible hunk of a CD-ROM drive, at only £499 ex. VAT. And both of them can even play your favourite audio CDs. Contact Computer Concepts on 0442 63933.

# THE PAGE FOR THE ULTRA-COOL

## Presented by that totally cool dude - Troy Hamilton



### The

#### Risc PC

Not just any old Risc PC mind you, but "Peter Bondar's Risc PC". Rumoured to have been the ultimate Risc PC ever created, the exact origins and ingredients of this legendary system have been lost in the mists of time. Its specifications are believed to have been so high that people came from far and wide to see it and marvel at its power and beauty. After extensive research in dusty archives, Acorn Action has managed to put together what we believe to be an accurate contents list for this exalted system. "Peter Bondar's Risc PC" really did exist.

This is what it contained:

7 slices,	50MHz ARM610 processor
170MHz VIDC20 video processor	1Gb SCSI drive
2Mb VRAM video RAM,	SCSI 1 expansion card
SCSI 2 expansion card,	ESP 16-bit sound expansion card
2 IDE drives,	Aleph One 50MHz PC expansion card
128Mb Magneto-optical drive	TV Tuner expansion card,
3 Sony CD-ROM drives,	21" Philips Brilliance Monitor
External amplified speakers,	Nicam video recorder
Eagle multimedia expansion card,	
Risc PC 10Base2 Ethernet network card	
192Mb DRAM (made up of a special 128Mb SIMM and a 64Mb SIMM)	

Estimated price: you can't afford it, and it's not for sale. In case you've never heard of Peter Bondar, he is Acorn's Product Marketing Manager. It is impossible to miss him at a party - just keep an eye open for the most outrageous tie in the house. He is THE coolest Acorn user around.



### Speculator

Okay, so I wasn't planning to talk about games in Cool Gadgets, but I'll make an exception for this piece of software. It's a fully fledged Spectrum emulator written by David Lawrence, the programmer behind the alternative to Acorn's PC emulator, FasterPC. Speculator runs all Spectrum software, including games, far more successfully than Acorn's BBC emulator runs BBC software. Unfortunately it is a very rare program that is almost impossible to obtain, simply because you cannot legally own or use it. It is said that the copyright holders for the Spectrum ROM refused to grant permission for Speculator to be released. Therefore it is totally uncool to have a copy of Speculator, because if you do, it has to be a pirated version. So delete it! Anyway, who wants to play Spectrum games when we've got Flashback and Simon the Sorcerer? Simon who?



### The

#### TQ-1200

Now this little number will definitely give your bank manager a nasty shock. At £4995 ex. VAT, the Calligraph TQ-1200 laser printer is not exactly cheap, but then it is probably the nicest thing you could ever give to your Acorn computer. It's the printer that dreams are made of. With a footprint not much larger than an A4 printer, the TQ-1200 is a 1200dpi A3 laser printer that will print on normal paper as well as paper and polyester plates, and that will make even perfectly normal people prostrate themselves on the floor chanting, "We're not worthy. We're not worthy." Professional publishing houses use Acorn systems with the TQ-1200 to generate plates for short-run printing, cutting out the need to generate Postscript files and playing them out onto film at the repro-house. Just think how impressed your friends would be if the next letter you sent to them was printed on an A3 sheet of paper. And imagine what you could do with party invites and posters! Definitely an item for the computer owner with everything, but highly uncool if the neighbour has a Cannon CLC-5000 colour laser printer, scanner and photocopier. Contact Calligraph on 0223 461143.

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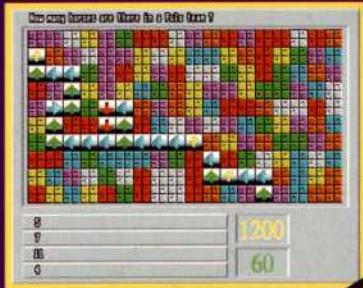
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